A STUDY OF THE EDINBURGH BURGESS COMMUNITY AND ITS ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, 1600 - 1680

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

While many histories of Edinburgh have been written, dealing with the architecture, folklore, culture, religion and politics of the city in the last five hundred years, little attempt has been made to chart the economic progress or to investigate the social structure of Scotland's capital. This thesis aims to illustrate the economic history of Edinburgh in the seventeenth century and to depict the urban society of the period, largely through the exploits of its freemen, the burgess community.

Edinburgh suffered its own particular disasters in a century whose middle years saw unprecedented national conflict. The accession of James VI to the English throne in 1603 removed the Scottish king and court to London. The last visitation of bubonic plague to Scotland in 1645 removed anything up to one-third of the population of Edinburgh, its port of Leith and outlying suburbs. In addition, the city's role as capital of a rebellious kingdom ensured her twenty years of both physical turmoil and financial hardship, firstly at the hands of the Covenanters and secondly under the occupation of Cromwell. One question which should be asked, but can only be partially answered from the available research material, is - what effect did these incidents and intervals have on the economy of the city?

Edinburgh was not noted as a manufacturing centre; its economic importance rested on trade and commerce. It is therefore to the merchants of the city that we should look for an insight into the economic condition of the burgh, and to a lesser degree, to the craftsmen, their socially inferior partners in the burgess community. The numbers, origins, status and social mobility of both groups have been studied, together with the sources and distribution of their wealth, in terms of goods, money, shipping and property. The impact of Edinburgh and its traders on other regions of Scotland has also been examined, and comparisons have been made, where possible, between the Scottish capital and the larger English towns. Finally, by using a variety of economic indicators, an impression has been pieced together of the economic progress of Edinburgh in the seventeenth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the first place, I should like to thank the Social Science Research Council for the grant which I received towards my studies.

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DECLARATION

While acknowledging the advice of others, I declare that this thesis is my own work and accept that I must be held responsible for any errors contained in it.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.O.E.C.	Book of the Old Edinburgh Club
E.C.A.	Edinburgh City Archive
E.H.R.	Economic History Review (Second Series)
E.R.B.E.	Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh
R.P.C.S.	Register of the Privy Council of Scotland
S.B.R.S.	Scottish Burgh Records Society
S.H.R.	Scottish Historical Review
S.J.P.E.	Scottish Journal of Political Economy
S.R.O.	Scottish Record Office
S.R.S.	Scottish Record Society

INTRODUCTION

Edinburgh is a unique city. Its geographical location, the castle and town perched upon a crag-and-tail formation, overlooked by an extinct volcanic hill, has seldom failed to impress the traveller. To those approaching from the west, the castle rock appeared "to rise from a plain of cultivated ground....: - the impression....was visionary".[1] From the palace of Holyroodhouse to the east, one visitor observed that the town seemed to be "built upon two mountains", another that "the City still riseth higher and higher towards the West".[2] Its growth circumscribed by the narrowness of its site, chosen for defensive reasons, Edinburgh continued to thrust upwards more or less within its medieval walls for much of the seventeenth century, the entire city "clinging to the spine of the Royal Mile"[3], the name given to the street which led downhill from castle to palace. Eventually, it began to sprawl southwards, a process which continued in tandem with the development of the New Town to the north, over a hundred years later.

As an example of urban development, Edinburgh attracted comments both complimentary and critical from seventeenth-century visitors. The spaciousness of its main thoroughfare, accounted handsome by many people, contrasted starkly with the maze of narrow, squalid side streets, flanked by high stone tenements, which plummeted down the hillsides to north and south. The central area was thronged with

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1. D. Wordsworth, Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland, A.D. 1803,ed. J.C. Shairp (Edinburgh 1974), p.243-4.
2. P. Hume Brown (ed.), Early Travellers in Scotland (Edinburgh 1893), Voyage du Duc de Rohan, 1600, p.93 and Fynes Morison's Itinerary, 1598, p.83.
3. C.J. Smith, Historic South Edinburgh, Vol.1, (Edinburgh 1978),p.3.

people and the closes and lanes were so cramped that one traveller seriously believed that Edinburgh housed a population of 60,000 in the 1630s, instead of less than half that figure.[1] All seventeenth-century visitors had one over-riding criticism, the lack of space and sanitation and the consequent filth of parts of the town; some perceived another of its major disadvantages, the physical distance and overt hostility between Edinburgh and its port of Leith.[2] For a city whose prosperity was based increasingly on trade, its lack of direct access to the sea was unfortunate; and Edinburgh's dependence on Leith caused her to intervene continually in the affairs of the smaller burgh and to dominate it by means of a feudal superiority which held the port in perpetual subjugation. As one recent historian of Edinburgh has noted, "without Leith, it was nothing".[3]

Edinburgh occupied a unique place among Scottish urban centres, dwarfing other burghs in both size and stature. It was the seat of Court and Kirk, of government and law; a centre of culture and learning, of society and fashion, of trade and commerce. It was the capital city; and while the differences in its character brought about in the eighteenth century by the building of the New Town appeared to signify that in many ways "it had become like London"[4], it could be argued that in some respects, it had always been like London, not in terms of size or wealth but in its relationship to the country it dominated. Edinburgh's place in the life of Scotland bore a

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1. Hume Brown, op.cit., Travels of Sir William Brereton, 1636,p.141.
2. Ibid, Taylor the Water-Poet, 1618, p.111-2 and Report by Thomas Tucker, 1656, p.164.
3. W.H. Makey, The Church of the Covenant :Revolution and Social Change in Scotland 1637-1651 (Edinburgh 1979), p.153.
4. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, (1969), p.348.

remarkable resemblance to that of London in England. It fulfilled similar functions, exerted the same magnetic pull, but on a much smaller scale, in the second-class context of poor, backward Scotland instead of wealthy, progressive England. Its economic hinterland was much more restricted than that of the English capital, the impact of which reached as far north as Newcastle. The geography of Scotland, however, was such that large parts of the north and west were almost inaccessible from the capital and therefore outside its sphere of influence.

Viewed from a different standpoint, that of Great Britain rather than Scotland, Edinburgh ranked among the largest cities in the country, the equal of, and possibly larger than Norwich or Bristol for much of the seventeenth century, certainly more populous than Exeter, York or Newcastle. These cities have come to be known as provincial or regional capitals, extending their influence over their own geographical area in a similar way to London over the whole nation.[1] If Scotland after 1603, and particularly after 1707, was to be reduced to the position of a region within Great Britain, then Edinburgh qualified as a provincial capital, on a par with those already mentioned.

It is at this point that Edinburgh's uniqueness again manifests itself. Alone among British cities of its size, Edinburgh's economic and social history in the seventeenth century has remained a largely neglected and uncharted area. The burgh has always been a favourite topic for popular historians and historical sleuths anxious to regale

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1. P. Clark and P. Slack, English Towns in Transition 1500-1700, (London 1976), pp.46-61.

the present-day population with anecdotes and minutiae of their city's heritage. Studies of Edinburgh in its golden age have attracted attention; more recently the spotlight has focused on the kirk and its relationship with the burgh in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from Reformation to Covenant.[1] The economic progress of Edinburgh and its social structure in the seventeenth century have continued to be disregarded. This thesis is an attempt partially to redress the balance.

There are three major sources of information about Edinburgh and its citizens in the period 1600-1680. Firstly, there are the records of the burgesses, guild brethren and apprentices of Edinburgh printed by the Scottish Record Society in the early twentieth century. Sufficient use has been made of this type of easily accessible material to suggest that it merits closer scrutiny in the case of Edinburgh. Work has been done on similar sources for Glasgow, for a number of English towns and most recently, for Edinburgh in the eighteenth century, and it has been demonstrated that "changing levels of registration of merchant and craftsmen burgesses can provide an approximate guide to the economic fortunes of a Scottish burghal community".[2] Apprentice records can also be used to indicate the

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1. The range is tremendous, from R. Chambers, Traditions of Edinburgh (Edinburgh 1825) to E.F. Catford, Edinburgh - The Story of a City (Edinburgh 1975), as well as more specialised works such as A.J. Youngson, The Making of Classical Edinburgh,(Edinburgh 1966). For the kirk and the burgh, see W.H. Makey, op.cit., and M. Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation, (Edinburgh 1981).
2. T. Devine, "The Cromwellian Union and the Scottish Burghs", in J. Butt and J. Ward (eds.), Scottish Themes (Edinburgh 1976), p.5. Other examples include T.C. Smout, "The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century", S.H.R., 47, 1968 and P. McGrath, Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol, (Bristol Record Society 1955).

geographical sphere of influence of an urban centre, as well as showing the changing size and popularity of crafts over a period of time.

Secondly, there are manuscript sources which deal with the wealth of the burgess community. These fall into two main groups, the testaments registered with the Commissary Court of Edinburgh and tax rolls of various kinds deposited in the Edinburgh City Archive. Both types have been extensively used for other cities including London, and for Edinburgh itself, largely in the sixteenth century.[1] The testaments in particular provide a continuous record of the years under review and can be supplemented by the use of isolated burgh assessments where possible.

Finally, there are trade figures which might help to indicate the buoyancy or otherwise of Edinburgh's commerce in the seventeenth century and so reflect the wealth and influence of her merchants. These include highly fragmented customs records for the port of Leith, covering a number of years in the 1620s, the late 1660s and early 1670s, some local shipping lists for the late 1630s and 1640s and the almost continuous series of Sound Toll Tables recording shipping movements to and from Baltic ports. It is hoped that these, taken together, will provide an impression of Edinburgh's trade for most of the period under review; for, in spite of its political, legal and administrative infra-structure, Edinburgh was essentially a trading city, "by far the busiest commercial town in the country".[2] In addition to these three main sources, the Burgh Records provide an

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1. See R. Grassby, "The Personal Wealth of the Business Community in Seventeenth Century England", E.H.R. 23, 1970 and Lynch, op.cit.
2. Hume Brown, op.cit., Voyage du Duc de Rohan, 1600, p.93.

almost continuous calendar of events and an insight into the everyday workings of the council.

The starting point for a study of Edinburgh in the seventeenth century has to be a brief introduction to the general history of the burgh at this time, and a division into four roughly equal periods seems appropriate. The first two decades were dominated by the removal of James VI and his court to London, not so much because it was an unmitigated disaster for the city but because it necessitated a re-adjustment to the new state of affairs. It is difficult to decide what economic impact the loss of the court had on Edinburgh; opinions differ and the records are generally unhelpful. On the positive side, the nation had been and was to remain at peace for forty years of James' reign, the Privy Council continued to meet in the Scottish capital in almost permanent session and the courts of law appeared to attract as much business as ever. Conversely, both the apprentice and burgess recruitment figures fell in the year immediately following the removal of the court, suggesting a temporary dislocation of local commerce. The impression given is therefore one of sharp initial recession but of equally rapid recovery. Another notable feature of the years to 1610 was the incidence of plague on at least two occasions, beginning in 1604, continuing intermittently until the end of 1606, and recurring in 1608. In contrast, the years to 1620 appeared uneventful and economic recovery should have been consolidated. The high point of the decade was the king's only return visit to Scotland in 1617 when he was feted at considerable expense by the town council.

The next period in Edinburgh's history covers the years up to the signing of the National Covenant in 1638. It has generally been

agreed that this, together with the previous decade, was a time of relative prosperity for the burgh and for Scotland as a whole, and in support of this view, attention has been drawn to the amount of new building within the Scottish burghs, the increased average value of estates recorded in the Registers of Testaments and the internal peace throughout the land.[1] Against this must be set the European wars of the period, in which Britain became directly involved against France and Spain in the late 1620s, while suffering only indirectly, if at all, from the Thirty Years' War; the famine of 1622-3 which caused one of the most catastrophic mortality crises of the century, together with further periods of scarcity in 1634-6; the ever-increasing level of taxation which had to be borne by the burgesses of Edinburgh during the reign of Charles I in order to pay for the new Parliament House, new and extensively altered church buildings and the royal visit of 1633; and the frequent references to depression which are to be found in official records, not only in the famine years, but in the mid-to-late 1620s and early 1630s when trade was felt to be in decay. Even when allowance is made for the normal over-reaction of burgh councils to any economic setback, real or imagined, the repetition of complaints suggests that they were based to some extent on fact. Local sources also seem to indicate mixed economic fortunes, with recruitment of craftsmen apprentices fluctuating widely and reaching low points for the entire century in the early and mid-1620s and the mid-1630s, and both merchant and craft burgess recruitment remaining at a low level for much of the twenty year span.

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1. G. Donaldson, Scotland - James V to James VII (Edinburgh 1965), p.242.

If some uncertainty exists about the prosperity of the 1620s and 1630s, there can be little doubt that the years from 1638 to 1660 brought unrelieved gloom to the capital city. The decade of the 1640s saw not only revolution, war and siege but unprecedented demands on the wealth of Edinburgh. As if these misfortunes were not enough, plague, brought back to Scotland by the returning army, ravaged the burgh and its suburbs in 1645 and 1646, drastically reducing the population of Leith and accounting for the deaths of between one-quarter and one-third of the total population of the urban area. The size of the epidemic is confirmed by the roughly five-fold increase in burgess testaments recorded in 1646 and by the highest burgess recruitment figures of the century in 1646 and 1647 as replacements for plague victims were encouraged to take the burgess oath. There were further peaks in 1648-9 when a less widespread epidemic occurred. Two years later, Cromwell was besieging the burgh, which, having surrendered, was thereafter subjected to military rule and considerable financial constraint. Throughout the 1650s, Edinburgh remained quiescent in the presence of Monck's army.

The economic dislocation caused by war and epidemic can only be imagined. Famine and shortages occurred as a result of both, effective administration of the burgh appeared to cease altogether in some years and trade was brought almost to a standstill, not helped by the advent of war against the Dutch. While indicating the severity of the situation, this is unfortunate from a historian's viewpoint as all official documents either ceased or were of limited value. There can be little doubt, however, that Edinburgh as the seat of government bore the brunt of the Cromwellian occupation and "was regarded as a sure source of income both for legitimate taxation and barely-

concealed extortion".[1]

The final period, covering the years from the Restoration in 1660 to 1680 seems to indicate at least a partial recovery from the traumatic events of mid-century, although it could hardly be otherwise. The impression given by the editor of the Burgh Records, however, is of a time when Edinburgh was at a low ebb, financially, administratively and commercially; the years up to 1680 are compared with those after the union of 1707.[2] There was relative peace at home, but two further wars with the Dutch interrupted trade in the mid-1660s and early 1670s. Nevertheless, the commercial outlook for Scotland as a whole appeared brighter in this period. The first chinks in the armour of burghal monopoly began to appear with the extension of the privilege of foreign trade to towns which were not royal burghs, and there were some early attempts at setting up manufactories in urban areas. Perhaps the picture only appears bright when compared with what went before, perhaps Edinburgh failed to display the signs of revival which were noticed elsewhere. On the contrary, apprentice recruitment reached new peaks in the twenty years to 1680 and the trend of burgess recruitment was also upwards. Both were to fall away again in the decade of the 1680s.

A number of reasons account for the omission of the last twenty years of the century from this study. In the first place, it was felt that many aspects of the period had been dealt with more than adequately by previous researchers. It seemed unwise to become involved in the decades immediately preceding the union of 1707, the

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1. E.R.B.E., 1655-65, (Edinburgh 1940), p.ix.
2. Ibid., 1665-80, (Edinburgh 1950), p.vii.

economic background to which has received considerable attention.[1] There were, however, three specific reasons for avoiding the final twenty years of the century. The founding of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh in 1681 was bound to have had repercussions within the burgess community, altering the balance between merchant and craft groups which had pertained for the previous hundred years. Secondly, the customs books of Leith for the 1680s and 1690s had already been researched, ruling out a study of trade for those years. Finally, it was found that the Commissariot record of Edinburgh from which much information was derived in earlier years became unaccountably less comprehensive in the period after 1670. It was therefore decided to terminate research in 1680 instead of 1700.

The structure of this thesis involves a division into three main sections. Section one deals with the size and workings of the burgess community and its component parts, and with the apprentices, who would provide the burgess community of the future. Section two deals with social and financial aspects of both merchant and craft groups - their status and social mobility, their participation in the council, the distribution of their wealth. Section three investigates trade and traders, suggests ways in which the commercial horizons of Edinburgh differed from those of the rest of Scotland, and the extent to which Edinburgh and its burgesses became involved in the trade of other regions. The final chapter uses a variety of economic indicators in an attempt to illustrate the overall economic fortunes of the burgh in the seventeenth century.

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1. See T.C. Smout, "The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707", E.H.R., 16, 1963-4, pp.455-67 and T.C. Smout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union 1660-1707 (Edinburgh 1963).

CHAPTER 1 THE BURGESS COMMUNITY

Edinburgh, as already suggested, fulfilled a number of different roles and functions. It was capital city, provincial centre and country town all at the same time; its functions varied from those of legal, political and religious centre at a national level, through social, administrative and commercial centre at a regional level, to trade and market centre at a local level. Although seemingly tiered in this fashion, the services it performed were continually overlapping. Its port of Leith, for example, handled local grain ships from East Lothian, coastal traders from Aberdeen and Newcastle, and overseas vessels from European ports. It was simultaneously local, regional, national and international in its functions and as a result, Edinburgh was the occasional entrepot for the whole of Scotland, a regular distribution point for the south of Scotland and chief market centre for the Lothians. At its highest level, as the capital city, Edinburgh was unique; at its most mundane, however, it was only a burgh, displaying features which were common to all seventeenth-century Scottish burghs, although magnified out of proportion to the rest. A study of Edinburgh has to balance these roles and functions, and view the city and its citizens from a variety of standpoints. To begin with, Edinburgh will be looked at as a burgh, albeit the largest and most influential in Scotland.

There were reckoned to be between sixty and seventy royal burghs in seventeenth-century Scotland.[1] As a group they were represented in Parliament and allowed to trade overseas but they were outnumbered

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1. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830, (1969), p.146.

by the generally smaller burghs of barony, the 'unfree' burghs which had no formal representation and restricted commercial privileges for much of the century.

The Scottish burghs as a whole differed widely in size, wealth and economic potential but hardly at all in the way they were organised and governed. Burghs had been conceived, at least in part, as communities of traders, and burgh law had been formed around the concepts of trade - the right of a burgh to hold markets, to monopolise trade in specific articles within a certain area, and to create a class of burgesses who originated as owners of burgh property but who developed mostly as men of business and commerce, the merchants and retailers, the craftsmen and small shopkeepers of the community.

Government of the burgh hinged on the distinction between the burgesses, from whom were chosen all council members, and the more numerous class of unfree men, with neither privileges nor rights in the running of local affairs. Within the burgess class, there were further divisions between merchants and craftsmen who between them accounted for the vast majority of the burgesses (94% in the case of Edinburgh). The sett or constitution of every burgh provided that the merchants always had a numerical advantage over the craftsmen in the composition of the town council, although they formed the smaller portion of the burgess community. Not even Glasgow, considered to be more socially egalitarian than most burghs in the seventeenth century, could boast of a council in which merchants and craftsmen had achieved parity in numbers.[1]

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Edinburgh council had

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1. Ibid., p.149.

consisted of twelve members, of whom ten were merchants and only two craftsmen. Protracted and occasionally violent campaigning by the fourteen crafts or trade incorporations of the city eventually resulted in the revised constitution of 1583, often referred to as the decreet-arbitral, which fulfilled their two major ambitions, that of increased representation in the council chambers and of entry to the merchant guild, previously denied to practising craftsmen. Henceforth, the council was to consist of twenty-five members, seventeen merchants and eight craftsmen, of whom six were to be craft deacons [1] and two ordinary craftsmen, but on certain occasions, notably the annual council elections, the disbursement of the Common Good and the setting of feus and tacks, this number was to be augmented to thirty-three in all by the inclusion of the remaining eight craft deacons. In effect this gave merchants and craftsmen almost equal voting power on a limited number of council issues, with eighteen merchant votes (sixteen council members and the provost who had two votes) to sixteen craft votes, and the new Edinburgh constitution therefore appeared every bit as enlightened as that of Glasgow.

However, a further examination of the revised constitution serves only to emphasise the relatively small gains made by the crafts. Although provision was made for a maximum of sixteen craft votes, none of the elected offices of the city, those of provost, dean of guild, treasurer and four bailies, one for each quarter of the city, was open to craftsmen, and they remained forever in the hands of the merchants.

In addition, the election of the sixteen craft councillors was subject

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1. A deacon was a senior member of his craft, chosen to assay and govern all work done by his craft brethren. There were fourteen deacons, one for each incorporated craft.

to considerable control by the merchant-dominated council. The candidates for election as deacon of each craft incorporation were first vetted by the council before a short list of three was resubmitted to each craft for their votes, thereby ensuring that 'unsuitable' candidates were excluded from office-bearing. The deacons themselves, to be chosen from among the senior master craftsmen frequently came from a 'craft aristocracy', a wealthier group of individuals, far removed from, and unrepresentative of, life on the shop floor.[1] Even the two ordinary craft councillors were chosen by the provost and his six magistrates, eliminating the possibility of democratically elected craftsmen.

Furthermore, not all crafts were considered to be equally suitable for inclusion in the inner council, the regular twenty-five members. An examination of the council lists over a period of sixty years indicates that certain crafts were never admitted, others only infrequently, and that craft councillors were almost invariably chosen from a maximum of eight out of the fourteen incorporations.

The question of craft penetration of the formerly exclusive merchant guild will be discussed later but it does not appear that many craftsmen were willing or able to take advantage of this privilege in the early years of the seventeenth century. To infer that a substantial element of power was transferred to the craftsmen by the changes of 1583 is therefore stretching a point. Nevertheless the gains made would appear to have been sufficient to ease any strains in the relationship between merchants and craftsmen, at least for a few decades.

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1. M. Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation (Edinburgh 1981), p.18.

The ten remaining places on the council, after the office-bearers and craftsmen had been accounted for, were all reserved for merchants and were habitually filled by the previous year's magistrates and three newly elected merchant councillors. Opportunities for an influx of new blood to the council chamber were further restricted in many burghs by the system in which the outgoing council elected the in-coming one, resulting in a council membership limited to a narrow group of merchant families, their in-laws and proteges. This would appear to have happened in Dundee and Aberdeen, and in many English provincial towns [1]. The most obvious theme in English urban history over the period 1500 to 1700 is said to have been 'the continuous growth of oligarchic magistracy'.[2] Whether or not this process occurred in seventeenth-century Edinburgh will be considered in a later chapter.

Beneath the council elite came the rank-and-file burgesses, both merchants and craftsmen. It was possible to become a burgess or member of the merchant guild in several ways. Kinship was always the most popular entry right in Edinburgh because it was the cheapest and simplest method of achieving burgess-ship, and it was equally feasible to claim by right of a father or father-in-law burgess. The estate of marriage had considerable economic importance in the seventeenth century because no-one could become a burgess unless he was married. Marriage to a burgess' daughter was a more agreeable means of entry to the burgess community for an outsider than the sizable payment which

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1. Smout, op.cit., pp.149-150; D. MacNiven (M.Litt. Aberdeen 1977) "Merchant and Trader in Early Seventeenth-Century Aberdeen" pp.105-6; P. Clark and P. Slack, Crisis and Order in English Towns (London 1972), pp.21-22.
2. Ibid., p.25.

would otherwise have been necessary; it conferred immediate social elevation for those without burgess kin of their own and for an apprentice, taking his master's daughter in marriage ensured immediate entry as both burgess and guild brother. For those less fortunate in love, a stranger was required to pay 100 marks (£67 Scots *) for his burgess-ship for most of the seventeenth century and an apprentice, on completion of his five or seven year apprenticeship, was obliged to serve a master for a further three years before becoming eligible "to be resavet burges", and another five years in addition if he wished to become a guild brother. Finally, it was increasingly possible from the mid-seventeenth century onwards to acquire burgess-ship gratis, by ingratiating oneself with the town magistrates, who were permitted to dispose of several gratis burgess tickets every year, or perhaps by outright bribery.[1] The burgess oath, administered to all new entrants, highlights those points which were considered particularly important to the burgess community.

"I sall be leill and trew to oure Soverane lord and to his hienes successoures, to the provest and bailyeis of this burgh. I sall vnderly and keip the lawis and statutes of this burgh. I sall obey the officeris of the burgh, fortefie and menteyne thame in executioun of thair offices with my body and my guidis. I sall nocht cullour vnfriemenis guidis vnder cullour of my awin. I sall nocht purches lordschips nor authorities contrare the fredome of the burgh. In all taxatiouns, watcheing, wairding, and all vther chairges to be layet vpoun the burgh, I sall willinglie beir my pairt of the commoun burding thairof with the rest of the nichtbouris of the burgh as I am commandet thairto be the maiestratis and officeris of the burgh, and sall nocht purches exemptiouns, privelegeis, nor immuniteis to be frie of the sam, renunceand the benefite thairof for evir. Fynallie, I sall attemp or do nathing hurtfull or preiudiciall to the libertie and commoun weill of this burgh. And swa oft as I sall brek any poynt or article heirof, I obleis me, my aires, executoris, and assignayes, to pay to the commoun warkis of this burgh the soum of one hundreth pundis as ane interest and damnage liquidat, and sall remayne in waird quhill I mak payment of the saymn. Swa help me God, ..." [2]

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[See next page for footnotes *, 1 and 2]

The wording of this oath seems to emphasise two points, firstly the concepts of loyalty and fraternity so dear to the hearts of all privileged urban groups in the seventeenth century and secondly, the sharp distinction drawn in matters of trade between the free and unfree. These are themes which recur throughout a discussion of the burgess community.

The burgesses of Edinburgh were subject to certain obligations but, having fulfilled them, were entitled to enjoy certain privileges. They were obliged to live within the city walls but the constant references to this condition in the council records (1593, 1635, 1640, 1642, 1662, 1673 and 1691 to name some instances) and the endless threats to remove burgess tickets unless the individuals complied suggest that this basic principle of burgh law was losing its force by the seventeenth century. (Non-resident burgesses had been acceptable in the thirteenth century but were proscribed later). Individual examples can be found in the testaments of the Commissary Court - John Smith, merchant burgess of Edinburgh, indweller in Tranent; George Crichton, merchant burgess of Edinburgh, indweller in Linlithgow; James Cockburne, merchant burgess of Edinburgh, indweller in Leith. The problem of residency was not confined to Edinburgh. A similar impression was gained by one of Exeter's historians who concluded that the frequent re-iteration of burgh laws of this type implied a less strict control of the trading community than custom demanded.[3] If

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* the mark or merk = 0.66 of £1 Scots (roughly 13s 4d). There were £12 Scots in every £1 sterling. Hereafter all figures are in £ Scots unless otherwise stated.

1. The relative importance of entry rights is discussed on pages 48-51
2. J. Marwick, Edinburgh Guilds and Crafts (S.B.R.S. 1909), p.143-4.
3. W. MacCaffrey, Exeter 1540-1640 (Cambridge 1958), p.58.

it was relatively easy to operate outwith the law in a town of Exeter's size, (it had a population of approximately 10,000 in the mid-seventeenth century), then it must have been even simpler in the case of Edinburgh, a city with two-and-a-half to three times that number of inhabitants.

As the oath declares, burgesses were also liable for taxation and were obliged to take their turn in guarding the town at night (watching and warding in medieval parlance.) They had to be in possession of suitable arms, a lance and a spear, or after 1626, a musket and pike; they had to keep an axe and a long weapon in their booths or chambers and to ensure that their servants were provided with the same; and they were required to attend weapon-showings several times a year. (After 1644, the arms qualification was rescinded in favour of a money payment to the Dean of Guild for purchasing arms on behalf of the town.) In return for these civic burdens, the burgesses had the sole right to buy and sell, except on market days, within the burgh and its liberty, an area which in the case of Edinburgh stretched westwards towards Linlithgow and eastwards towards Haddington. A privilege of this nature, however, was bound to be open to widespread abuse by those who desired the benefits of trade without the restrictions of burgess-ship.

Most of this study of the burgess community will be concerned with the activities of merchants and craftsmen, the majority of the burgess group. There were others, however, less likely to use the commercial privileges available to members. Roughly 500 assorted individuals (6% of the total) elected to become burgesses during the seventeenth century for reasons, presumably, of social prestige and almost two-thirds of this number were members of the legal profession.

The remainder consisted of ministers and landowners, many of whom had connections with the merchant class, together with some schoolmasters and army personnel, and a small group of lowly people, messengers, waiters and 'workmen' whose reasons for becoming burgesses are uncertain.

Collectively, the lawyers remain one of the more obscure groups in seventeenth-century Edinburgh society. Generally speaking, they were exempt from taxation but on the occasions when they were assessed, their reputed wealth was amply confirmed. The tax roll of 1565 assessed their contributions at more than three times that of the average merchant, the Annuity Tax of 1635 indicated that the majority of them occupied houses with rentals above £100 and the Poll Tax returns for 1693 demonstrated once more that they were at least equal to the wealthiest merchants.[1] While many of them became burgesses, often claiming by right of merchant kinsmen, others failed to do so, presumably because it did not seem worth their while. Their burgess-ship did not entitle them to share in the government of the burgh which was the prerogative of merchants and craftsmen alone.

The term lawyer as used in this context covers three different groups:- the writers to the signet, among the wealthiest lawyers; the advocates, mostly drawn from a higher social stratum than the others; and finally the writers, an imprecise body of legal scribes, the lowliest of the three. Professor Donaldson has suggested that the

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1. Based on figures quoted in Lynch, op.cit., p.569; G. Donaldson, "The Legal Profession in Scottish Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in D.N. MacCormick (ed), Lawyers in their Social Setting (Edinburgh 1976), p.167 and my own figures based on the Annuity Tax; M. Wood, "Edinburgh Poll Tax Returns", B.O.E.C., Vol.XXV, 1945, pp.104-108.

status of all legal men was tending to rise in the seventeenth century and that fewer of them came from burgess stock than in the previous century.[1] This would appear to be borne out by examples from the Burgess Roll. The writers who became burgesses after 1650 were nearly all related to merchants, whereas before 1650 many of them had been related to craftsmen - to fleshers, tailors, stablers and tanners. By the end of the century those advocates and writers to the signet who bothered to obtain burgess-ship and were not given it gratis, were invariably from legal and landowning families, or from a merchant background, whereas the first fifty years furnished the odd example of men recruited from more humble origins, like James Wilson, a writer to the signet who claimed his burgess ticket as the son-in-law of a tailor, or a certain John Smith who was the son-in-law of a surgeon.

A high percentage (almost 80%) of this miscellaneous group of burgesses were also members of the guild and in the years after 1650, many were beneficiaries of gratis tickets from the council. They included James Leblanc who is listed only as French Protestant, a number of skippers such as William Horne, skipper in Bo'ness and Henry Jansen, "maister of the good shipp called the George of Leith.....in the tread of wheall fishing", and James Haig, metster or official weigher of goods. Perhaps it would be cynical to surmise that many of these gratis tickets were given for services rendered to the merchant councillors.

In addition to this motley collection of individuals, there was a further group of honorary burgesses who neither paid for their privilege nor frequently had any connection with the burgess

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1. Donaldson, op.cit., p.162.

community. For this reason, they have been excluded from the total since they were in no way active participants in burgh life, and had their burgess-ship solely during their own lifetime, with no right of transmission to kin. Large numbers were sometimes admitted together as part of a civic celebration; for example, the retinues of James VI on his only state visit to Scotland in 1617, of Charles I on his visits in 1633 and 1641, and the future James VII in 1679 were all granted honorary burgess-ship, the last group amounting to 124 persons. Appeasement of factions led to the distribution of burgess tickets to English soldiers and civilians in the Cromwellian period and equally to 'persons of quality' returning to the town after the Restoration, together with some of their followers.[1] These people were not genuine burgesses of Edinburgh, neither part of the trading community nor connected with it in any way and they have therefore been eliminated from the figures of the Burgess Roll.

All of the aforementioned groups within the burgess community, the merchants and craftsmen, the lawyers and professional men, formed a very small fraction of burgh society. This brings us to the largest category within any burgh, the indwellers or unfreemen, all those who were not members of the burgess community but who constituted the vast majority of town dwellers. Although a few were prosperous, (unfree lawyers for example), most were poor and unprivileged, having no rights and few prospects. Apprentices and journeymen might hope to become fully-fledged craftsmen in time but many were doomed to remain craft servants or employees, scarcely better off than the unskilled

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1. D. Robertson and M. Wood, Castle and Town - Chapters in the History of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh 1928), p.82.

labourers, the vagrants and other countless individuals who swelled the ranks of the urban poor.

The indwellers of a burgh have usually been portrayed in this manner and the gulf between them and the burgess class has always been considered wide. It is possible, however, that a sizable though unquantifiable number of unfreemen were no worse of, financially, than many burgesses, that they chose deliberately to exist as an 'unofficial sector of commerce', lacking the status of the freeman but exempt from his responsibilities and burdens, and that the better-off members of the unfree class were a growing element in mid and late seventeenth-century urban society.[1] These were the people on whom the wrath of town councils fell, the people responsible for the 'great hurt and prejudice sustenit be the burgesses and gild-brethren'[2] of the burghs. If burgh councils failed to check this growth of unfree merchants and craftsmen, however, it was not for lack of trying. The Edinburgh council went so far as to appoint a searcher in 1659 to ferret out illegal traders, in payment for which he was to receive half of the fines of all unfreemen reported by him.[3] How far he succeeded in his task is not known but references to unfree traders continue to appear in council records from time to time.

Another group of inhabitants who were technically unfree because they were not burgesses consisted of members of the gentry and nobility who maintained town houses in cities such as Edinburgh and

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1. T.M. Devine, 'The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', in G. Gordon and B. Dicks, Scottish Urban History, (Aberdeen 1983), p.95, p.97.
2. E.R.B.E., 1642-55 (Edinburgh 1938), p.288.
3. E.R.B.E., 1655-65 (Edinburgh 1940), p.168.

the English provincial capitals in order to pursue business or legal matters, to indulge in social activities or, in the Scottish case, to attend sessions of parliament. This floating population is said to have accounted for 4% of Edinburgh households in 1635, but although they contributed to the economic well-being of the city, they took no part in its internal government.[1]

There is a final group within the urban hierarchy which has yet to be mentioned, namely the guild members. There was no such thing as a craft guild in Scotland - craftsmen burgesses were members of 'trade incorporations' which fulfilled all the functions of guilds - and therefore the guild referred to is the merchant guild.

By the seventeenth century, a mere burgess was not a person of much stature; even the most humble craftsman had to be a burgess before he could practise legitimately as an independent master. His ability to climb the social ladder or acquire much wealth was very limited and in order to do either of these, the burgess found it necessary to become a member of the guild, which bestowed on him a much higher status and enabled him to engage in foreign trade. In addition to paying a further and more substantial sum of money to the town coffers and perhaps having to wait a period of years, the prospective entrant was means-tested and carefully vetted before admission. Whether the act of 1585 which set out the entry qualifications was actually upheld for much of the seventeenth century is debatable since most council legislation was difficult to enforce for any length of time. When funds were low, did the guild court really discriminate against those who were not possessed of "honest,

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1. Lynch, op.cit., p.9.

discreitt and guid conversation"?[1] Furthermore, since the means qualifications were never raised, it follows that possession of 1000 marks and 500 marks worth of movable goods required by a merchant and craftsman respectively before admission to the guild became in time less of a barrier to entry. The guildry fees themselves were only a nominal 20s for the children of existing guild members although they stood at £10 for apprentices and £100 for strangers for much of the century. Perhaps stricter application of the 1585 act in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, contrasted with its lessened impact in later years, can partly explain the considerable growth in guild members as the century progressed, a topic which will be discussed more fully later on.

The relationship between and within the various groups in urban society can be regarded from two different standpoints, one emphasising the disparities between groups of burgesses, the other concentrating on their similarities. The traditional view depicted urban life as a perpetual struggle between, firstly, the merchants and craftsmen, and secondly, the burgesses and the unfree, with each group attempting to dominate the other and factions within the groups trying to gain the upper hand.[2] The body of merchants in any burgh, (so it is said), subjugated the body of craftsmen and attempted to quell their political and economic aspirations while, at the same time, small groups within the merchant class ensured that they were elevated to positions of power over the remainder. The craftsmen, in turn,

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1. Marwick, op.cit., p.142.
2. Robertson and Wood, op.cit., pp.59-64 and J. Colston, The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh (Edinburgh 1892), p.xxxii and p.xlii.

endeavoured to bolster their more precarious position against incomers, and the frequent passing of acts against unfree traders throughout the seventeenth century served to illustrate the problem of trying to maintain a small privileged group of monopolists against a much larger group of outside competitors. The entire burgess community was welded together only when defending itself against the unfreemen of its own and other burghs. Its sole aim then was to maintain its privileged position and its legal rights and, when threatened, to re-iterate burgh laws against the growing numbers of the unprivileged which became more impossible to enforce with the passing of time.

More recently, a different view has been advanced. It has been argued that the divisions and conflicts which are supposed to have existed for much of the sixteenth century between Edinburgh merchants and craftsmen have in fact been greatly exaggerated.[1] There is every indication that after the decreet-arbitral, relations between the two burgess groups were harmonious enough and that even before 1583, major disputes arose most frequently at the time of the council elections and less commonly throughout the year.[2] Less emphasis is now laid on the conflicts which existed between the burgess groups and more on the differences within the same groups. The very terminology used and the precise divisions implied by 'merchants' and 'craftsmen' tend to conceal the great variations in lifestyle of group members. A merchant could be any sort of trader:- a peddler of cloth, a small-

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1. Lynch, op.cit., pp.60-62.
2. Edinburgh 1329-1929, (sexcentenary volume of the city, Edinburgh 1929), p.272; p.278.

time dealer in haberdashery or general domestic goods, an importer of wines or exotic spices, a wealthy wholesaler with a large and varied interest in foreign trade. A merchant often managed to combine some or all of these activities at different stages in his career and he might occasionally have dabbled in several facets of trade at the same time. A craftsman could be a poor weaver, ekeing out a living, or a goldsmith or apothecary, either of whom might have been more affluent than the 'average' merchant, or a modest baker or shoemaker merely plying his craft. Within the craft incorporations there were gulfs as vast as those between rich and poor merchants, and the wealthiest craftsmen had more in common with many merchants than with their own craft brethren. Even an indweller was not necessarily an unprivileged pauper. The considerable range of wealth within and between groups of merchants, craftsmen and unfreemen may be illustrated by the following wills recorded in a random year, 1640.[1]

John Inglis, merchant burgess, town councillor	...	£17,574
Charles Hamilton, merchant burgess, town councillor	...	6,049
John Hunter, tailor burgess	...	4,982
Henry Harper, tailor burgess	...	284
John Charters, merchant burgess	...	73
Robert Malcolm, merchant burgess	...	1,315
Charles Fairholme, tanner at West Port	...	1,923
Robert Lauchland, bonnetmaker in Leith Wynd	...	1,397

The fact that two unfreemen were wealthier than several burgesses might not be important in itself, although it suggests that a more careful assessment of the so-called unprivileged might be required. What it seems to highlight is the relative poverty of many legitimate traders whose possession of burgess-ship appeared to benefit them

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1. Commissary Court Records, Register of Edinburgh Testaments, CC8/8/59.

little, in financial terms.[1]

The foregoing discussion has indicated that generalisations about burgh society, about the wealth and privileges of different groups, should be treated with caution. It is not easy to paint a picture of the typical merchant or craftsman burgess, let alone the mere indweller. The very mediocrity of the 'average' trader ensured his anonymity. His name seldom appeared in official documents or council records because it was not he who built and rented new tenements, or lent money to an impoverished court or zealous Covenanters. He did not purchase ships and freight cargoes abroad, he did not act as factor to other Scots merchants, he did not set up manufactories or apply for patents. He did not make a fortune but neither did he lose one. He simply existed.

With this background in mind, it is the aim of this chapter to quantify the Edinburgh burgess community in the seventeenth century, using such figures as are available. Most of the information is derived from the Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren, which exists both as manuscript and printed source.[2] The Burgess Roll supplies the name, status (whether burgess alone or burgess and guild member), date of burgess-ship, occupation and right of entry (e.g. by right of a burgess father) of each new recruit in the seventeenth century. From these details, numerous estimates are possible including the yearly total of admissions, the size of the burgess community at specific points in time and the ratio of merchant to

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1. A discussion of the use of testaments as indicators of wealth will be undertaken in a later chapter.
2. Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild-Brethren, 1406-1700, S.R.S. Vol.59 (Edinburgh 1929), hereafter the Burgess Roll.

craftsmen burgesses. There are, however, some problems in dealing with figures of this type. In the first place, the reliability of almost any seventeenth century figures is questionable and depends partly on the original scribe. Secondly, the twentieth-century mind is predisposed to accept conclusions based on numbers; there is a tendency to think of statistics as more accurate than verbal generalisations. To attempt to quantify seventeenth-century burgh society is therefore to lend an exactness to the subject which may not be altogether justified.

Having said this, it would nevertheless appear that the Burgess Roll is a fairly credible document. It has obviously been written with care, ("beautifully written" is how the original transcriber depicts it)[1], and therefore compares very favourably with other manuscripts of this period. (The Edinburgh Commissary Court records, for example, are often badly written and contain numerous errors). Because the Burgess Roll is only a list of names and dates, there cannot have been any incentive to distort the truth, as in the case of the customs records which, because of their nature, were open to abuse. It was also in the interests of the town council to keep an accurate register of burgess admissions since the burgess fees formed part of burgh revenues. Finally, it is quite possible that, given the small number of burgess families relative to the total urban population, prospective burgesses would have been known by town officials and in times of financial stringency, of which there were many throughout the century, they may have been actively sought out

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1. Ibid., p.13.

and encouraged to claim their rights, thus adding to the burgh funds. According to the editor of the Burgh Records, this certainly occurred after a year of pestilence when the town would be "well searched for recruits to the depleted ranks of burgesses".[1]

Against this, there may have been some errors and more importantly, omissions. The existence of an illegal trading sector, operating just outside the city walls or in Leith if not within the city, has already been noted, and there is no way of knowing how many were involved in this group or what impact they would have made on the legitimate commercial sector if they had been admitted to the freedom of the burgh. The impression given by a study of the council records and the Edinburgh Register of Testaments is that they were mostly petty merchants, peddlers or cramers, or the meaner sort of craftsmen, while from a different viewpoint, it would appear that few, if any, of the wealthier traders named in the above sources or the customs records were not burgesses. The citizens of Edinburgh, it seems, were largely conformist and law-abiding with regard to obtaining burgess-ship; that, at least, is the conclusion which has to be reached from the available evidence and for the period under review. If, as recently suggested, the size of a freeman class depended largely on the vigour with which the authorities enforced that condition, then the Edinburgh burgess roll is unlikely to be marred by significant omissions.[2]

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1. E.R.B.E. 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.xlvi.
2. J. Patten, 'Urban Occupations in Pre-Industrial England', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 1977, p.298.

Over 8,000 inhabitants of Edinburgh became burgesses of the city from 1600 to 1699. Of these 37% styled themselves merchants, 57% were craftsmen and the remainder consisted of professional men, lawyers, ministers, army officers and schoolmasters together with some land-owners. Eliminating the professional category whose reasons for becoming burgesses had little to do with commerce and more to do with status, the ratio of merchants to craftsmen, decade by decade, remained fairly constant, with merchants forming rather more than one-third and craftsmen rather less than two-thirds of the burgess community. A very similar ratio existed in Glasgow at the beginning of the seventeenth century but sixteenth century Edinburgh contained a somewhat higher proportion of merchants.[1] One source has suggested that merchants in fact outnumbered craftsmen while more recent figures for the 1550s indicate a fairly even ratio between the two, with 48% merchant burgesses and 52% craftsmen burgesses.[2] For the seventeenth century, it is certain that merchant burgesses were out-numbered by craft burgesses for the entire period, in ratios which varied from two-to-one to three-to-two. In only three decades did the proportion of merchants top 40% and two of these were the 1640s and 1650s, the most turbulent and least representative years.

The reasons for the change in composition of the burgess community are not immediately obvious. There was apparently no fixed

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1. D. Murray, Early Burgh Organisation in Scotland, (Glasgow 1924), p.484.
2. I.F.Grant, Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603, (Edinburgh 1930), p. 382; Lynch, op.cit., p.10 and 51. Dr. Lynch's figures for the merchant burgesses, based on the muster and tax rolls, are probably too high, since he appears to have included all those who were taxed with the merchants e.g. maltmen and apothecaries.

ratio between the merchants and craftsmen at any time, nor did there appear to be a ceiling on numbers of either category. A glance at Figure 1 (page 54) indicates the wild fluctuations in burgess admissions over a hundred year period and lends support to the theory that there was little or no control of entrants.

There are a number of possible explanations, one of which centres on the dramatic increase in population (around 100%) which occurred between 1560 and 1635.[1] The main factor in urban population growth at this period is reckoned to be immigration from the countryside, and this applies with particular emphasis to a town of Edinburgh's size and squalor.[2] In turn, one of the major components of this population influx was the apprentice group. Approximate numbers of apprentices recruited from outwith the city are available for the seventeenth century, 70% of whom were craft apprentices.[3] Assuming that a similar ratio can be applied to the later sixteenth century, it follows that a large number of both potential craftsmen and their customers were added to Edinburgh's population at this time, sufficient perhaps to bring about an alteration in the composition of the burgess community. The need for more craftsmen to serve a growing population is more apparent when one considers that the majority of crafts were concerned with the basic needs of a humble urban society, food, clothing and shelter rather than the provision of luxury goods. Conversely, there was no parallel need for more merchants to serve the community; extra merchandise could be purchased

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1. Ibid., p.2 and p.14.
2. Clark and Slack, op.cit., p.17 and M.W. Flinn (ed.), Scottish Population History from the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s. (Cambridge 1977), p.183.3.
3. See my figures in Chapter 2.

by the existing number of merchants whereas extra craftwork required increased labour to produce it.

Other reasons might have resulted from the decreet-arbitral of 1583. Although it has been suggested that changes in craft representation and opportunities for advancement were largely cosmetic, this might not have been obvious at the time and craftsmen possibly felt encouraged to take up burgess-ship under a seemingly more egalitarian regime. It also appears that apprentices first benefitted from cheaper burgess entry payments in the second half of the sixteenth century, a factor which probably affected the less wealthy craftsmen recruits more than their merchant counterparts. There were two other influences on burgess numbers, although they probably had some bearing on both merchants and crafts. Firstly, the council appears to have pursued matters relating to burgess-ship and guildry with particular enthusiasm in the aftermath of the decreet-arbitral. Whether this stemmed from reasons of increased efficiency or financial embarassment is not known but their interest might have led to greater numbers being 'persuaded' to enter the Burgess Roll. The other factor is that of general prosperity. If the relative peace and stability of life in Scotland under the rule of James VI allowed commerce to thrive, craftsmen might have been enabled for the first time to take advantage of burgess-ship in significantly higher numbers. A combination of some or all of these reasons might have accounted for the changing ratio of merchant and craftsmen burgesses.

A study of the Burgess Roll also makes it possible to estimate the ratio of the burgess community to that of Edinburgh as a whole and its total size at any point in the century. Two methods have been

used, the first based on population estimates, the second on numbers of burgess admissions. Recent work on the sixteenth century has suggested a figure of roughly 770 burgesses in 1558 out of a total population of approximately 12,000 or no more than 7% of the town's inhabitants.[1] Assuming a household size of 4.5, burgesses and their dependents may have totalled about 3,500 persons, or roughly 30% of Edinburgh's population.[2]

There are two dates in the seventeenth century for which recent population figures exist. Using poll tax data, a possible population of somewhere between 25,500 and 28,500 has been arrived at for 1691, depending on whether the household size is estimated to be 4 or 4.5 per dwelling.[3] If burgesses were the same proportion of the total population as they had been in 1558, the corresponding burgess community would be between 1,800 and 2,000, or roughly between 7,000 and 9,000 including dependents.

Less precise calculations are also available for 1635, the year in which the population of the burgh was first assessed for payment of the Annuity Tax, intended to provide adequate finance for the town's ministers. It has been suggested that the population of Edinburgh, within the walls, might have been somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000 at this time and this in turn would have meant a burgess community of between 1,400 and 1,750, or 6,000 and 8,000 including dependents.[4] The snag in all the preceding calculations is, of course, that the

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1. Lynch, op.cit., p.10.
2. The size of the household in seventeenth-century Edinburgh is reckoned to be between 4 and 4.5, see Flinn, op.cit., p.200.
3. Ibid, p.188.
4. W.H. Makey, The Church of the Covenant: Revolution and Social Change in Scotland, 1637-51. (Edinburgh 1979), p.153.

burgess community might not have remained a constant proportion of the total population over a period of 130 years and there is no way of knowing how it fluctuated.

Professor Smout attempted to calculate the size of the merchant community of Glasgow in the seventeenth century by another method.[1] By multiplying the average number of burgess recruits each year by the estimated life expectancy of a man attaining burgess-ship, he was able to obtain an admittedly approximate figure for the merchant community of between 400 and 500 people. The same method could be applied to the burgess community of Edinburgh but it has certain drawbacks. In the first place, burgess recruitment in Glasgow proceeded at a fairly even pace throughout the century, whereas in Edinburgh it appears to have fluctuated more, making average recruitment a less meaningful figure. Secondly, it is not an easy matter to estimate life expectancy in a seventeenth-century burgh and Professor Smout's figure of 25 years after attaining burgess-ship seems a little high.[2] If this method was applied to Edinburgh, it would mean multiplying an average burgess recruitment figure of 80 per annum by a life expectancy of 25 years, giving an estimate of 2,000 burgesses at any point in the century. This is obviously too crude to be of much value.

To overcome the problem of life expectancy, a sample of burgess

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1. T.C. Smout, "The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century", S.H.R., 1968, PP.60-61, hereafter Smout, 'Merchant Community'.
2. It is also partly dependent on the age at which burgess-ship was achieved, see my figures Chapter 2, p.73.

testaments was examined to obtain accurate lengths of burgess-ship.[1] Testaments were chosen from the 1610s, 1640s and 1670s and individuals were checked against entries in the Burgess Roll. A sample of 300 names was obtained in this way and was then divided into the total burgess years of the group. The average arrived at was a length of burgess-ship of just over 21 years, and the most favourable decennial average was found in the early 1640s when a figure of 22.6 years was reached.[2] From these calculations it would appear that a burgess might expect to survive, on average, for 21 to 23 years after qualifying.

Even this attempt at precision is not entirely satisfactory. How meaningful, in this case, is an 'average' life expectancy? Numerous examples have been found of burgesses, particularly merchants, surviving for up to forty years after their burgess entry, a reflection perhaps of their generally higher income and status, their ability to obtain burgess-ship more easily at a younger age, and then to survive longer in a seventeenth-century urban environment. (On the other hand, disease was no respecter of class; the plague of 1645-6 carried off many wealthy Edinburgh merchants as well as those of more humble background.) A number of factors influenced the age of burgess entry[3] and therefore the length of burgess-ship and we have already

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1. Commissary Court Records, Register of Edinburgh Testaments, CC8/8/46-50, 59-60 and 74. Each testament records the date it was registered and frequently the date of death. If the person was a burgess, the date of his burgess entry will be found in the Burgess Roll. The length of years between registration as a burgess and death can therefore be calculated.
2. A total of 20 years was analysed, spread over the 3 decades, and the length of burgess-ship for individual years varied between 18 years (in 1613, 1615 and 1670) and 27 years (in 1620).
3. See Chapter 2, p.73.

seen that some merchants were no better off than craftsmen or unfreemen, so that generalisations are not very helpful. Nevertheless, an 'average' business career of 21-3 years is lower than that of other comparable seventeenth-century towns - a Glasgow merchant, as already noted, might have survived 25 years on average while an Exeter merchant could apparently expect 25-30 years as a freeman.[1] It would therefore be tempting to suggest that the lower figure for Edinburgh burgesses is the result of including craftsmen as well as merchants, whereas the figures for Glasgow and Exeter are based solely on merchants. This theory looks less attractive when life expectancy figures for Norwich are taken into account; a freeman of Norwich, either merchant or craftsman, could have expected to survive for 27-9 years throughout the seventeenth century.[2] Comparisons such as these serve to illustrate the amount of conflicting evidence with regard to urban life expectancy; but if we eliminate the most extreme figures, an Edinburgh burgess survival figure of between 21 and 25 years would seem to cover most possibilities.

The problem of obtaining an average recruitment figure per annum for Edinburgh burgesses was tackled on a decade by decade basis. Burgess admissions were totalled and set out as follows:-

TABLE 1.1 NUMBER OF BURGESS RECRUITS, 1600-99, BY DECADES.

1600 - 09	686	1650 - 59	697
1610 - 19	793	1660 - 69	698
1620 - 29	629	1670 - 79	872
1630 - 39	616	1680 - 89	855
1640 - 49	1061	1690 - 99	929

Source:- Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren.

1. W.G. Hoskins, 'The Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter' in S. Bindoff J. Hurstfield and C. Williams (eds), Elizabethan Government and Society (London 1961), p.164.
2. J.T. Evans, Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion and Government, 1620-1690 (Oxford 1979), p.10.

Firstly it was decided to eliminate the 1640s decade as being unique and wholly unrepresentative. (This was the decade in which a particularly severe plague epidemic struck Edinburgh, in 1645 -6 and again in 1648, which made for distortions in the normal pattern of burgess recruitment.) Having omitted this decade, it appeared that the years 1600-69 displayed a fairly similar level of admissions and the years 1670-1699 showed an obvious similarity at a higher level of recruitment. The yearly recruitment figure for the first six decades averaged 68 burgesses (26 merchants and 42 craftsmen) while the average for the later period was 88 burgesses (34 merchants and 54 craftsmen). When these averages were multiplied by the life expectancy figures of 21-25 years, the size of the burgess community was as follows (figures derived from population estimates in brackets) -

1600 - 69	1,450 to 1,700 burgesses	(1635 1,400 to 1,750)
1670 - 99	1,850 to 2,200 burgesses	(1691 1,800 to 2,000)

Both sets of figures are remarkably similar and it therefore seems likely that the total burgess community of Edinburgh in the seventeenth century varied from 1,400 in the early years of the century to 2,200 in the later years, that it remained approximately 7% of the entire burgh population and accounted for about 30% of the city's households.[1] This almost leads one to suspect that some control was exercised over burgess numbers but nothing has yet been found to substantiate this view. Additionally, it has to be assumed that the number of burgesses fluctuated in proportion to the size of the population, for which there is no adequate information from 1635

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1. 1,400 burgesses out of a population of 20,000 = 7%, 2,200 burgesses out of a population of 28,500 = 7.7%

to 1691. All that can be said with certainty is that Edinburgh's population of perhaps 25,000 in the late 1630s was substantially reduced by the plagues of the 1640s, possibly falling further as a result of war and its economic consequences. It must have grown rapidly in the second half of the century to have reached an estimated population of around 27,000 by the 1690s.

Given these assumptions for the total burgess community, the number of merchants in Edinburgh at the beginning of the century was probably between 550 and 650 and at the end of the century between 700 and 800. This represents roughly 3% of the town's inhabitants, a similar figure to that for 1558 (370 merchants out of 12,000) and only slightly lower than figures for Glasgow, where there were reckoned to be between 400 and 500 merchants throughout the century.[1] The corresponding figures for craft burgesses were between 900 and 1,100 and between 1,150 and 1,300.

Returning to the 8000-odd burgess recruits, approximately 3,500 or 45% of this number were also guild members. Of these 62% were merchants, 27% were craftsmen and professional people made up the remainder. Eliminating the latter as before leaves a ratio of two-thirds to one-third in favour of merchant members of the guildry, quite the reverse of simple burgess recruits and, in addition, a far less constant proportion of the whole. In some decades merchants comprised over 80% of guild admissions, falling to less than 60% in others. The probable reason for the fluctuating numbers is that burgesses were nearly all admitted as young men, newly married or newly qualified, embarking on a career for which the burgess

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1. Lynch, op.cit., p.10 and Smout, 'Merchant Community', p.61.

qualification was essential, while recruitment to the guildry could take place at several different stages in a burgess' life. If he could claim kinship to a guild brother and satisfy the required means qualification, he would probably join the guild when he obtained his burgess ticket but if he was an apprentice or a stranger, the obligatory period of service to a freeman or the higher cost of entry would tend to defer his admission. Some burgesses joined the guild only when their initial careers had prospered enough to enable them to pay for and benefit from guild membership, as in the case of William Forrester, who became a weaver burgess in 1633 and joined the guild in 1643, by which time he was calling himself a merchant, or Robert Childers who qualified as a saddler in 1665 but was entered guild brother in 1670 as a merchant. Finally, some burgesses acquired membership only in their old age, in the hope perhaps that they or their dependents might benefit from the charitable aspects of the guild. The haphazard recruitment of guild members is reflected in the ever-changing ratios of merchants to craftsmen.

Of greater interest is the increasing popularity of guild membership as the century progressed. In the first half century, only one-third of all burgesses became guild members whereas in the second half century, the figure had risen to roughly one-half. For merchant burgesses, the attraction of the guild was even greater. Of the 1,500 or so admitted from 1650 to 1699, 89% were also guild brothers, a considerable increase from the preceding half century when the figure was only 57%. (For craftsmen, the corresponding figures are 25% and 14%).

What reasons can be advanced for this growth in guild members? It seems highly improbable that most of them wished to engage in

foreign trade, which was the main economic privilege of guildry, and the prestige conferred by guild status would surely be undermined by the very numbers trying to attain it. This must have become obvious to the town council which debated the problem of guild membership and burgess-ship at regular intervals during the century. In 1602, they decided that the price payable was too low and therefore encouraged "sindry persouns of small substance and less industrie to cum and remayne within this burgh."[1] The fees were duly raised only to be increased again in 1647 after complaints that the freedom of the burgh had become "contemptable".[2] In 1661, a document from the former bailies was placed before the new council expressing the wish that

"some expedient would be thoght upon be the magistrats and counsell for hedging up of that privilege of gildrie, that the vulgar throng may not find so easie accesse, (nor) even those who have right be birth or service according to the true meaning of the sett".[3]

The hope thus voiced apparently came to nought but it does indicate that responsibility for the continued depreciation in the value of guild membership lay not so much with those who purchased the privilege by the 1660s but with those who claimed cheap kinship rights. Purchase was never an important entry right and became less not more popular towards the end of the century. The increase in guild members cannot, therefore, be attributed to this cause.

It seems likely that the means qualification, originally fixed in 1585 at 1000 merks worth of movable goods for a merchant and 500 merks worth for a craftsman, and presumably intended to keep down the numbers of entrants, either operated no longer or had become so

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1. Marwick, op.cit., p.160.
2. Ibid., p.170.
3. Ibid., p.179.

devalued as to pose no deterrent to guild membership, at least for the merchant class, since 90% of them joined the guild. This inflated membership could be regarded as a sign of increased prosperity in the trading community; on the other hand, it might be a reflection of the changed composition of the merchant guild brought about by the decreet-arbitral of 1583. Prior to that, craftsmen were excluded from the guild and only slowly gained a foothold as the seventeenth century progressed. Their advent, nevertheless, breached the guild's exclusiveness and the status of the guild brother was steadily eroded. Originally, it can be argued, a higher percentage of merchants joined the guild for both social and economic reasons but eventually, when the prestige of a guild brother had been whittled away, the wealthier merchants formed themselves into their own Merchant Company, which was in effect an elite within the guildry, exclusively for merchants.[1] As already noted there were many sorts of trader sheltering under the umbrella of the term 'merchant' and the wealthiest members of the burgess community had no more desire to rub shoulders with their less affluent fellow merchants than with most of the craftsmen.

It has to be concluded that guild membership in the later seventeenth century was not only more easily attainable but had become essential rather than desirable for the aspiring merchant burgess. For the craftsman, membership of the guild placed him in a growing but still modest craft aristocracy.

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1. A. Heron, The Rise and Progress of the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh, 1681-1902. (Edinburgh 1903).

The size and composition of the Edinburgh burgess community and merchant guild should not be viewed entirely in isolation; it might be more relevant to ask whether or how they differed from similar groups in the larger Scottish burghs and the English regional capitals and what factors governed burgess admissions. Comparative studies, however, create their own problems. For Scotland, research on both Glasgow and Aberdeen has concentrated largely on merchant traders and has not been broadened to include the entire burgess community.[1] Furthermore, the meaning of the terms 'merchant' and 'merchant guild' seem to vary to such an extent in different localities that one cannot be certain of comparing like with like. In Aberdeen, for example, it would appear that while not all members of the merchant guild were merchants - as in Edinburgh there were professional and possibly craft members - all merchants had to be members of the guild, whether they traded abroad or only in domestic products.[2] For English towns, there are similar problems of definition. In Bristol, very few 'merchants' bothered to obtain their freedom although a variety of men calling themselves drapers, mercers, clothiers and grocers engaged in overseas trade.[3] The distinctions which are often drawn in the larger English towns between wholesalers and retailers reflect a more sophisticated commercial sector than could be found in seventeenth-century Scotland. The situation in many English ports is further complicated by the existence of separate Societies of Merchant Adventurers, who had attempted to establish, but generally failed to

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1. Smout, 'Merchant Community' and MacNiven, op.cit.
2. MacNiven, op.cit., p.116
3. P. McGrath, Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol, (Bristol Records Society 1955), p.ix-x.

maintain, monopolies in trade. Where two ostensibly separate groups of traders co-existed, their membership in practice frequently overlapped, making the task of quantifying the merchant community impractical.

The most satisfactory comparison of burgess communities which can be undertaken is between Edinburgh and Norwich, which vied with Bristol as the most populous English town of the seventeenth century.[1] It was probably a little smaller than Edinburgh in 1600 - the population was roughly 12,500 in the 1580s while Edinburgh had reached that figure some twenty years earlier - but by 1620 it was said to contain 20,000 people and by 1690, 28,000. These population estimates are very similar to those for the Scottish capital, and the growth of Norwich, like Edinburgh, was also curtailed by plague and economic dislocation in the 1620s and particularly in the 1640s, resulting in a population of about 20,000 for much of the century.

A comparison of the freemen communities also shows marked similarities. Table 1.2 indicates the level of admissions in the period 1600-79; the Edinburgh equivalents are in brackets.

TABLE 1.2 NUMBER OF FREEMEN RECRUITS IN NORWICH, 1600-79, BY DECADES

1600-09	456	(686)	1600-49	620	(1061)
1610-19	630	(793)	1650-59	642	(697)
1620-29	672	(629)	1660-69	886	(698)
1630-39	654	(616)	1670-79	886	(872)

Source: J.T. Evans, Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion and Government 1620-1690, p.9.

Removing the figures for the first decade when Norwich was reckoned to be smaller than Edinburgh, and the 1640s which were

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1. P. Corfield, 'A Provincial Capital in the Late Seventeenth Century: the Case of Norwich' in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700, (London 1972), p.263.

utterly distorted in Edinburgh's case, the remaining years up to 1660 show an average yearly recruitment rate of 65 for Norwich, (68 for Edinburgh). After 1660, there is a significant rise in numbers for both cities to a yearly average of 78 for Norwich (81 for Edinburgh), including figures for the 1690s. The actual size of the freemen community of Norwich has been computed at 1,800 in 1640 compared with an upper estimate of 1,750 burgesses in Edinburgh in 1635, and 2,300 in 1680 compared with 2,200 burgesses of Edinburgh in 1691, at which time freemen comprised approximately 8% of the town's population (7-8% for Edinburgh). This suggests a certain similarity in the social structure of the two cities and both fulfilled a range of identical functions. The likeness, however, should not be exaggerated; the wealth of Norwich depended largely on manufacturing, that of Edinburgh on commerce.

It is also interesting to note that the total number of merchants in Aberdeen, roughly 300 in the 1620s, represents a similar proportion of the burgh population (3%) to that of both Edinburgh and Glasgow.[1] Although there is ample scope for quantitative error in these calculations and the previous ones for Norwich, the comparisons raise a number of important questions. Is this all pure coincidence; was there a tendency for numbers of freemen groups to be self-regulating; or did burghs in some way control admissions? If there was an optimum size of burgess/freemen groups in relation to a given urban population, was it arrived at spontaneously, by council manipulation or as a result of other factors?

Although numerous studies of freemen's rolls have been carried

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1. MacNiven, op.cit., p.99.

out, very little is actually known about what governed admissions. The rigidity of burgh regulations undoubtedly played a part coupled with a town's ability to enforce them. There is the matter of burgess payments - in some towns, Norwich for example, freemens' sons were admitted gratis - whereas in Edinburgh all prospective burgesses had to pay, albeit a token amount, and their numbers might have varied in relation to the city's indebtedness. It has been argued that finance was in fact the major consideration in the recruitment of the Edinburgh burgess community although this remains unproven.[1] A study of burgess enrolment in mid-seventeenth century Glasgow has suggested that the guilds regulated the number of new entrants at least partially in accordance with the level of business activity.[2] This would certainly correspond with the economic thought of the period which continued to see matters in terms of a fixed economic unit to be divided and shared amongst the business community.

At different points in this chapter, conflicting statements about Edinburgh burgess admissions have been made; firstly that the erratic fluctuations in yearly recruitment suggested that no control was exercised over numbers and secondly that the almost unchanging proportion of burgesses in the population over a lengthy period might have indicated an element of regulation. To reconcile these statements is not impossible. There were factors in the short-term which influenced the year-by-year admissions -epidemics, war, economic and financial considerations and perhaps others. In the long-term,

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1. Lynch, op.cit., p. 11.
2. T. Devine, 'The Cromwellian Union and the Scottish Burghs: the Case of Aberdeen and Glasgow, 1652-60' in J. Butt and J. Ward (eds.), Scottish Themes (Edinburgh 1976), p.9.

however, it seems probable that there was an unwritten intention of the council to keep the number of burgess entrants at a level appropriate to the size and condition of the burgh. This would explain similarities in the proportion of free to unfreemen in a number of towns while at the same time allowing fluctuations in the size of individual communities over a period of time.

One area in which comparative studies are possible is that of social mobility of burgess recruits. An analysis of entry to the burgess community, and to the merchant group in particular, has been carried out both for Glasgow and Aberdeen to find out how difficult it was to break into the merchant class from the ranks below.[1] The results of the Glasgow survey suggested a high degree of mobility, with significant numbers of merchants rising from craft backgrounds, while in Aberdeen far fewer were able to make the transition.

Before undertaking a similar survey for Edinburgh burgesses, a few points should be recalled. Rigid divisions between merchants and craftsmen exist on paper and therefore have to be acknowledged, but in practice, there is a blurring of definition at the border line between the two groups. Some 'merchants' were probably no more than petty stallholders in the market place and little different from, or wealthier than, many craftsmen. Did any tangible benefits accrue from a change in social group at this level of society? Instances have been recorded in Aberdeen of 'merchants' from craft backgrounds returning to their craft because they had become less rather than more prosperous after a change in status.[2] Such fluidity was probably a

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1. Smout, 'Merchant Community', pp.68-9 and MacNiven, op.cit., p.267.
2. Ibid., p.267.

feature of most burghs but is unrecorded in the majority of cases.

It is easy enough to show upward movement from a craft background to that of a merchant but this need not imply considerable social mobility. It is not just a question of what kind of 'merchant' a man became; it is also a question of what kind of 'craftsman' he had been. Social mobility from a surgeon's or goldsmith's family to that of a merchant might have been negligible; from a candlemaker's or cordiner's family, the change was obviously greater. It is therefore not enough to demonstrate from figures alone that movement occurred between the member groups of the burgess community; it would have to be shown that genuine social improvement took place, from a 'real' craft to a 'real' merchant background, not just a vague middle-class job-swop. Only if significant numbers of overseas traders and merchant councillors, the elite groups, had risen from ordinary craft families could it truly be stated that social mobility was possible within the burgess community, and then over a relatively short period of time. Upward mobility in one generation is a different matter from gradual social betterment over a lengthy period of years.

It is with these reservations in mind that we should look at figures for the Edinburgh burgess community. The following tables are based on the entry rights given by the total number of merchant and craftsmen burgesses of Edinburgh throughout the seventeenth century (some 7,750 individuals in all).

The results show considerable variation as the century progressed. In the first fifty years, one-third of merchant burgesses entered the ranks by purchase or apprenticeship, and it was obviously possible and even relatively common for merchant burgesses to claim entry by right of craftsmen kin; nearly one-fifth of the

total did so while almost half of the entrants claimed kinship to an existing merchant. Adding the last two figures together gives a figure of 65% of merchants claiming burgess entry by right of father or wife, not surprisingly since this was the cheapest means of acquiring burgess-ship, and this is remarkably similar to figures for Glasgow and Aberdeen where some 70% of burgesses qualified by kinship rights.[1]

TABLE 1.3 RIGHTS OF ENTRY OF MERCHANT BURGESSES, 1600-1699.
(percentages in brackets)

	1600-49		1650-99	
Son of merchant	334	(22)	228	(19)
Son-in-law of merchant	375	(25)	229	(15)
Son of craftsman	91	(6)	66	(4)
Son-in-law of craftsman	177	(12)	95	(6)
Apprenticeship	181	(12)	388	(25)
Purchase	357	(23)	153	(10)
Gratis	6	(0.5)	305	(20)

Source: Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren

The importance of a suitable marriage is again illustrated since 37% of young merchants claimed entry through their wife compared with 28% through their own fathers. The fact that 12% of merchant burgesses embarked on their careers by marrying the daughter of a craftsman shows some upward mobility, and although, as already noted, there were different levels of crafts, there were instances of merchants marrying into almost all craft groups. There were also different levels of merchant but even some members of the elite group started their careers with marriage into the crafts. William Salmond, whose name figures prominently in the customs books of the 1620s, claimed both his burgess ticket and his guild membership by right of his father-in-law, a locksmith, as did John Rynd, another overseas trader who

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1. Smout, 'Merchant Community', p.68 and MacNiven, op.cit., p.256.

married the daughter of a litster, and Robert Keith, who was the son-in-law of a barber. These and other examples could be cited to show that social mobility was not just a feature of the Glasgow burgess community in the seventeenth century.

Kinship rights, however, declined in popularity after 1650. They fell from 65% of all merchants to 44%, and within that figure, the proportion of merchants claiming craft kinsmen also declined. Social advancement through marriage dropped from 37% to 21% of the total and the numbers marrying a craftman's daughter halved. The relative importance of purchase and apprenticeship was entirely reversed in the second half of the century, with apprenticeship accounting for one-quarter of all entrants and purchase only 10%. Purchasing one's way into the merchant community had always been a costly business although entry fees remained constant throughout the century, apart from a hiccup in the late 1640s when they more than doubled, before returning to their previous level within a few years. It therefore seems unlikely that cost was a deterring factor after 1650 but it is possible that the advantages to a stranger of being a burgess of Edinburgh were insufficiently attractive, particularly after 1672 when the royal burgh's monopoly of foreign trade was broken. On the other hand, the attractions of apprenticeship as a means of entry to the burgess community increased over the same period. It was a convenient means of attaining burgess-ship if one was unable to claim kinship rights and was cheap to obtain, remaining at the rate of £5 for ordinary burgess-ship and £10 for guildry for the entire century.

The main reason for decline in all other entry rights might have been the dramatic increase in gratis entries during the later seventeenth century, from a tiny fraction of admissions to fully one-fifth

of all burgess entrants. The granting of burgess-ship without payment was illegal under the burgh constitution and frequent protests about the custom were heard in the council chambers, yet it continued and even increased into the early eighteenth century. An unknown, but possibly significant number of burgesses who obtained their membership free of charge were actually qualified by one of the usual rights, and if the granting of gratis burgess-ships had not got out of hand after 1660, it is reasonable to assume that some of these individuals would have qualified either by kinship, apprenticeship or purchase. Patrick Aikenhead qualified as both burgess and guild brother in 1684 as the son of a merchant but was awarded the privileges gratis because he was the grandson of David Aikenhead, ex-provost of the burgh. John Barclay was admitted in 1681 by right of his apprenticeship to a merchant but received his tickets gratis, as did Alexander Edmiston in 1666 (a merchant apprentice) and James Graham, the son-in-law of a merchant in 1667. If these and many others had paid for their freedom in the usual way, the pattern of entry rights might have looked different. However, it would be impossible to re-allocate all the gratis entrants and a less clearly defined picture of merchant recruitment will have to suffice for the second half of the century.

Despite this problem, it is clear from Table 1.3 that upward mobility from a craft background to the merchant class was becoming less common towards the end of the period, for reasons which remain largely obscure, although the growth of an illegal trading sector and changes in the composition of the merchant community might have been factors. This does not imply, however, that the business sector stagnated for lack of fresh talent. The vast influx of outsiders required to sustain and enlarge the capital's population throughout

the century must have constantly replenished the burgess community by apprentice and purchase entry.

The entry rights of craftsmen burgesses are set out in Table 1.4.

TABLE 1.4 RIGHTS OF ENTRY OF CRAFTSMEN BURGESSES, 1600-99.
(percentages in brackets)

	1600-49		1650-99	
Son of merchant	71	(3)	89	(4)
Son-in-law of merchant	87	(4)	79	(3)
Son of craftsman	510	(23)	418	(17)
Son-in-law of craftsman	491	(22)	316	(13)
Apprenticeship	742	(33)	952	(38)
Purchase	284	(13)	268	(11)
Gratis	46	(2)	355	(14)

Source: Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren.

The differences between the two half-centuries are less marked in the case of the craftsmen burgesses. Kinship and purchase figures fell, apprenticeship and gratis entries rose in the same way as for merchant recruits but less dramatically. The numbers of craftsmen claiming merchant kin were almost constant for the entire century, and as expected formed a small fraction of craft entry rights. There are instances of skinners, tailors, tanners and cordiners with merchant kinsmen but in nearly every case, the new recruit remained only a simple burgess and did not attain guild membership. This suggests that some of the 'merchants' by right of whom they qualified were of the petty stallholder variety.

Although detailed comparisons with English towns have not been possible, it is interesting to note that for Bristol and Norwich, apprenticeship accounted for almost half of all freemen recruits and that, unlike Edinburgh, kinship rights became more not less popular from the middle of the century onwards.[1] A shift in recruitment

1. McGrath, op.cit., p.298 and Evans, op.cit., p.10.

patterns of freemen away from outsiders and towards the sons of existing freemen was apparently a feature of many English cities after 1650.[1]

Finally the annual admissions to the Edinburgh burgess community have been set out in Figure 1 in an attempt to relate the fluctuations to possible factors governing them. It has already been suggested that the peaks and troughs of recruitment resulted from a combination of specific events (war, famine, disease) with underlying trends in the local economy, the whole fitting into a framework which was regulated by the council. The trends in recruitment will be brought out more clearly in a later chapter by using a seven-year moving average; the present graph is intended mainly to highlight particular circumstances and to show whether the above explanation of burgess recruitment is plausible.

Although it would seem that in some instances the level of admissions can be linked with specific events, there are obviously other movements in the graph which cannot be explained. The recruitment figures for merchants and craftsmen also diverge on numerous occasions, demonstrating that the two groups were sometimes influenced by different factors. The initial impression is of a volatile period in burgess admissions up to 1650, with wide variations in numbers, followed by a steadier half-century in which fluctuations are less erratic and a generally upward trend is suggested by the graph. The marked differences in the years before and after 1650 are felt to justify a division of the century at this point in both

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1. L. Stone, 'Social Mobility in England 1500-1700', Past and Present 33, 1966, pp.47-8.

present and earlier discussions of the burgess community.

There are some years when the two sets of figures for merchants and craftsmen coincide, often when an event of over-riding importance took place. Both graphs fall in 1603-4, suggesting that the removal of the Court temporarily affected the economy of the city, in 1624 in the aftermath of a severe famine, in 1640 and 1645 for reasons which were probably connected with the raising of armies and the economic dislocations caused by war and uncertainty, in 1651 after the arrival of Cromwell's army, in the mid-1660s and early 1670s when depression was suspected partly as a consequence of the Dutch wars and at other times for no known reason. The sets of figures rose simultaneously in 1605 and 1608-9, years of plague when inhabitants of Edinburgh would have been encouraged to take up their freedom to make good the loss to the burgess community and in 1641 and 1646 for reasons presumably connected with the civil disturbance and again as a result of plague.

There are dates, however, for which no explanation of the figures is possible, and periods during which merchant and craftsmen admissions diverge considerably - in the 1630s and 1660s, for example. On the whole, it is less easy to offer explanations for the peaks and troughs from 1650 to 1699 than for the earlier years. Figure 1 appears to explain certain fluctuations; whether it relates to fluctuations in the economic condition of Edinburgh will be analysed later.

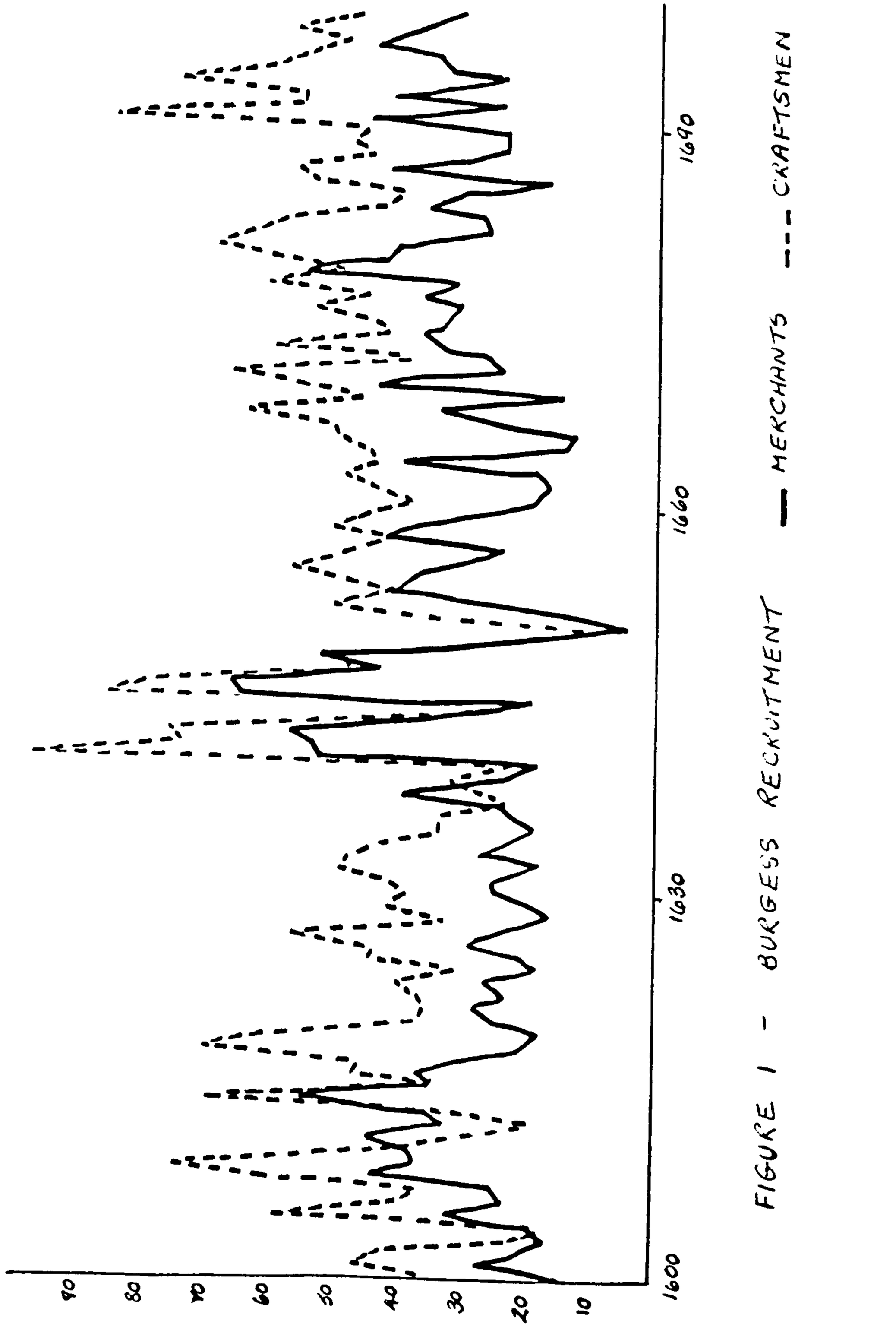
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
1600
1630
1660
1690
— MERCHANTS --- CRAFTSMEN
BURGESS RECRUITMENT

FIGURE 1 -

CHAPTER 2 THE APPRENTICES

The continued growth of any urban centre depended on considerable migration from the countryside. The majority of migrants, in the seventeenth century as now, were probably younger people, under the age of thirty; and a substantial though unquantifiable number were likely to be apprentices.[1] The latter also formed a distinct group amongst the 'unfree' of any burgh, a group whose chances of social mobility and limited prosperity were, theoretically, better than those of most other indwellers, and from whom large numbers of the next burgess generation would be drawn. A study of apprentice registers therefore serves two purposes; it highlights an important element in society outwith yet vital to the future of the burgess community while providing the only reliable source of information about newcomers to a town.

The Register of Edinburgh Apprentices has been printed for the entire seventeenth century and consists of two volumes, 1583-1666 and 1666-1700, but there are no separate registers extant in the City Archives.[2] The particulars of each apprentice, his name, his father's name and occupation, his place of residence, the name and occupation of his master and the date of his indenture, have been copied from the scroll registers of the Dean of Guild Court, where

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1. P. Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns 1580-1640" in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700 (London 1972), p.124 and J. Patten, "Patterns of Migration and Movement of Labour to Three Pre-Industrial East Anglian Towns" in J. Patten (ed.), Pre-Industrial England (1979), p.143.
2. The Register of Apprentices of the City of Edinburgh 1583-1666, ed. F.J. Grant, (S.R.S. 1906) and The Register of Apprentices of Edinburgh 1666-1700, ed. C.B.B. Watson, (S.R.S. 1929).

they are intermingled with the names of burgesses and guild brethren. The latter were transferred into a separate register to form the Burgess Roll, and it was certainly the intention of the town council to keep a similar roll of apprentices. The decreet-arbitral of 1583 mentions that an apprentice book should be made and kept by the town clerk and the apprenticeship fees, payable at entry and upset (end of apprenticeship), should have been recorded as they were used "for support and releif of the failyeit and decayet burgesses".[1] It therefore seems likely that an independent register of apprentices did exist throughout the seventeenth century but that it has been subsequently lost or destroyed.

There are certain drawbacks to be found in the registers. In the first place, they do not appear to record the apprenticeships of those already resident in Edinburgh, in particular the sons of existing burgesses. Over 80% of those registered were drawn from outwith the city environs and an analysis of some 1,500 names further revealed only twenty-nine persons listed as sons of Edinburgh burgesses, the remainder being either the sons of indwellers of the town and its suburbs, or more commonly, of people living elsewhere. No explanation has been found for these omissions but there are a number of possible reasons. Sons of burgesses might have been entered in a separate register which is no longer extant, or a somewhat casual attitude might have been adopted towards their booking on the grounds that they and their fathers were known to town officials. A majority probably followed their fathers' calling [2] and it is possible that

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1. J. Marwick, Edinburgh Guilds and Crafts, (S.B.R.S. 1909), p.131-2.
2. A sample of approximately 100 names suggested that 60% of burgess' sons followed their fathers.

the son of a burgess who had been taught a trade by his father was permitted to set up in business as a result of his 'informal' apprenticeship. This system certainly operated in Sheffield during the seventeenth century although there is no documentary evidence to suggest that it happened in Edinburgh.[1] It is also likely that burgess' sons claimed their entry by kinship rights rather than by apprenticeship on cost grounds alone; as a result, it is possible that less importance was attached to their booking than in the case of outsiders. Finally, we might be witnessing the earliest signs of the demise of a formal apprenticeship system, commencing with those who were already the most privileged and able to evade burgh laws. This process was well under way by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, according to the most recent research on this topic, although there was no official relaxation of the rules in Edinburgh.[2] Throughout the seventeenth century, all prospective burgesses of the town were supposed to prove that they had served a local master for an appropriate period, normally a minimum of five years, even though they intended to claim burgess entry by kinship, but it is not known whether this rule was always enforced in the case of Edinburgh-based apprentices.

Information about local lads, however, is not essential for the main themes of this study although it would be relevant to a discussion of the total number of apprentices in the burgh. Other

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1. E.J. Buckatzsch, "Places of Origin of a Group of Immigrants into Sheffield 1624-1799" in P. Clark (ed.), The Early Modern Town, (1976), p.292.
2. T. Devine, "The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries" in G. Gordon and B. Dicks (eds.), Scottish Urban History, (Aberdeen 1983), p.95.

omissions from the registers are considered to be more serious. Their usefulness in pinpointing the geographical origins of Edinburgh apprentices is slightly reduced by their failure to record a number of 'home addresses' or by listing them in terms which are either too obscure or too ambiguous to trace. There is little point in trying to locate names as common as Newmylnes or Brigend, and even with the help of the original Ordnance Survey maps of Scotland, almost one-fifth of the place names mentioned could not be found. Secondly, their value as a guide to the social background of apprentices is limited by the fact that over 50% of entries do not specify a father's trade or position (baxter or schoolmaster, tenant or burgess), and this has caused considerable problems with classification.

After allowance has been made for these drawbacks, the Register of Apprentices nevertheless supplies a wealth of interesting and useful data; but the impression, as with many seventeenth-century documents is that while it is basically reliable for the information it contains, there is no way of knowing how much it omits, or whether the omissions would significantly alter our findings. Clerical error or unknown administrative change cannot be ruled out but, faced with the alternatives of accepting and using the records with due reservation or ignoring them, there is only one possibility.

The total number of apprentice entries listed for the period 1583-1699 is upwards of 8,000, a very high figure, particularly when compared with the 6,000-odd apprentice indentures available for Norwich, the second city of England, over a longer timespan, only 2,000 of which related to migrants.[1] It was decided that the only

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1. Patten, op.cit., p.145.

practical solution was to use a sample of names for analysis and this was based on apprentices whose surname began with the letter B. The structure of society in Scotland was such that large numbers of people with the same surname inhabited particular districts. Most surnames conveyed an immediate regional bias; for example, an Armstrong, Scott or Maxwell would most likely be associated with different parts of the Border country, just as a 'Mac' would normally be found in the north-west Highlands. The choice of sample letter was therefore limited and it was decided that the letter B offered the least geographical bias. This sample was then used to study the social and geographical origins of Edinburgh apprentices and their occupational mobility during the seventeenth century.

There were 937 names altogether, 663 of whom were craftsmen and 274 merchant apprentices, or 11% of the whole apprentice population. In both categories, the father's occupation was specifically mentioned in roughly 50% of cases - in the remainder he was designated as either 'of' or 'in' a given place name. Where the name was recognised as a burgh or a suburb, 'in Melrose' for example or 'in Potterow', the father was taken to be an indweller of that place but where the name appeared to refer to a farm or farm township, he was assumed to be a relatively small tenant. (Larger tenants tended to be given a title - 'portioner', 'tenant' or 'fermourer'). If the word 'of' was used, the person was assumed to be the owner of the land or at least a substantial tenant; in either case he represented the more wealthy sector of rural society. The above classifications are based on the meanings given in the Scottish National Dictionary where 'in' refers to "an inferior tenant holding land on short leases" and 'of' applies to landowners and tacksmen. This definition would have been

accepted in early eighteenth-century Scotland and in the absence of further information, we have assumed that it would have been equally acceptable in the seventeenth century. The only alternative to this classification was to omit all those who had not been given specific occupations and although this reduced the number of names to 474, both methods were tried.

It has also been assumed that unless the word 'burgess' was mentioned, a craftsman father was a journeyman or practised his craft in an area where burgesses were not permitted, such as the unfree suburbs outside the walls of Edinburgh where considerable numbers of craftsmen lived and worked. Professions included ministers, schoolmasters and members of the legal community, and while an attempt has been made to differentiate between urban and rural indwellers - many are obvious - it is recognised that rigid divisions between urban and rural society hardly existed outside the largest Scottish burghs at this time.

The social origins of the merchant apprentices have been tabulated below.

TABLE 2.1 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF MERCHANT APPRENTICES (1)
(percentages in brackets)

	1583-1666	1666-1699	Total
Merchants	13 (8)	7 (7)	20 (7)
Craftsmen burgesses	4 (2)	2 (2)	6 (2)
Burgesses	18 (11)	3 (3)	21 (8)
Unfree craftsmen	7 (4)	10 (9)	17 (6)
Professions	13 (8)	6 (6)	19 (7)
Landowners	40 (24)	32 (30)	72 (26)
Portioners/tenants	1 (1)	10 (9)	11 (4)
Indwellers (urban)	34 (20)	9 (8)	43 (16)
Indwellers (rural)	25 (15)	21 (20)	46 (17)
Others	3 (2)	1 (1)	4 (1)
Unknown	9 (5)	6 (6)	15 (5)
	167	107	274

Source:- The Registers of Edinburgh Apprentices 1583-1699.

One would expect to find that they had been recruited largely from the ranks of the burgesses and educated classes of other burghs and from the landowning class but in fact a substantial minority came from relatively humble backgrounds.[1] Between 35% and 40% of prospective merchants claimed nothing more pretentious than a journeyman craftsman, a small tenant farmer or an indweller for a father and recruitment from these classes remained stable for the entire century. Amongst those launching themselves into the merchant class were a sailor's son from Prestonpans, an indweller's son from Banff, a gardener's son from the outer suburbs of Edinburgh, and even the son of a common workman. A small but steady number of apprentices came from the professional group, overwhelmingly from ministers' families, from Kirkintilloch to Culross and from Aberdeen to Annan. Merchants and burgesses of other towns, both large and small, apprenticed their sons to Edinburgh traders including a number from Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. It is hard to imagine the reasons which prompted such a decision, especially in the case of Glasgow, which was said to be flourishing particularly in the period after 1660.[2] Landowners and larger tenant farmers, however, formed the most significant and expanding source of merchant recruits for much of the seventeenth century, assuming our original definitions of landholders to be correct, and those from a rural background outnumbered urban-based apprentices. The relative importance of urban/rural recruits,

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1. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People (1969), p.162, hereafter Smout, 'Scottish People'. Smout suggests that Edinburgh merchant recruits were often the sons of lairds and merchants.
2. T.C. Smout, "The Development and Enterprise of Glasgow, 1556 - 1707", S.J.P.E. VII (1960), pp.194-212.

together with those from high/low status backgrounds, is indicated in Table 2.2 under the headings of geographical and economic divisions. These groupings bring out the considerable increase in rural-based merchant apprentices towards the end of the century and the overall size of the less wealthy recruitment sector. The latter is particularly surprising when it is remembered that recent work on early eighteenth-century Edinburgh merchant apprentices has suggested that an overwhelming majority were drawn from the "middle strata of Scottish society".[1] It was decided to carry out an analysis of entrants in the period 1701-30 using the same definitions as in the seventeenth century, and these are also shown in Table 2.2.

It is perhaps unfair to make direct comparisons between figures for both centuries as there are differences in the source material. Those for the seventeenth century are based on a sample of recruits during the heyday of the formal apprenticeship system while the eighteenth-century figures are based on a greatly reduced total of apprentices at a period when apprenticeship was probably in decline and distortions in the recruitment pattern were more likely to occur.[2] The element of continuity over 150 years nevertheless makes comparison interesting. The figures for the period 1701-30 appear to maintain trends which evolved in the preceding century; a higher proportion of apprentices continued to be drawn from rural rather than urban society while there was a further increase in the percentage of recruits from the higher status sectors and in particular from the landowning class, together with a drop in numbers recruited from the

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1. Devine, op.cit., p.103.
2. Ibid., p.95 and Patten, op.cit., p.155.

TABLE 2.2 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF MERCHANT APPRENTICES (percentages)

Economic divisions	1583-1666		1666-99		1701-30	
Wealthy/higher status:						
Merchants/crafts/burgesses	21)		11)		12)	
Landowners/tenants	25)	54	39)	56	43)	65
Professions	8)		6)		10)	
Less wealthy/lower status:						
Unfree craftsmen	4)		9)		11)	
Indwellers	35)	39	28)	37	11)	22
Others/unknown	7		7		14	

*Geographical divisions	1583-1666	1666-99	1701-3
Urban:			
Merchants/crafts/ indwellers/legal	46	32	33
Rural:			
Landowners/tenants indwellers/ministers	47	62	54
Others/unknown	7	7	14

Source: The Registers of Edinburgh Apprentices 1583-1730.

* It is realised that divisions of this kind are very approximate. Generally speaking, it was found that legal men were town dwellers and ministers came from rural parishes, hence their allocation.

unfree/indweller group. Having said this, over 20% of merchant apprentices still came from a lowly background, demonstrating that aspiring merchants were not necessarily from the middle ranks of society.

Not all aspiring merchants, however, became merchants in reality.[1] The questions which should therefore be asked are not about the social origins of merchants apprentices but about the social origins of qualified merchants. Did the same ratio of high/low status and rural/urban recruits apply to the successful lads who finally joined the Edinburgh merchant class; were those from lowly backgrounds as well represented at this stage as at the beginning of their training or did those who were better connected gain any advantage in the intervening years; were the sons of indwellers able to rise to the level of overseas merchants or were they more likely to remain traders of the meaner sort? These are questions which cannot be answered in a general way, although examples of achieving apprentices will be noted where possible.

It was decided to calculate the social origins of merchant apprentices by a second method, based again on fathers' occupations but this time omitting all of the more ambiguous entries, that is, those where the father's status had previously been assessed on his implied relationship with the land he worked or the community he lived in. The principal effects of this were to reduce the overall sample by 50% and to substantially curtail the number of rural recruits, since very few landowners were referred to outright but by implication.

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1. See my figures, p.71.

TABLE 2.3 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF MERCHANT APPRENTICES (2)
(percentages in brackets)

	1583-1666	1666-1699	Total
Merchants	13 (16)	7 (12)	20 (14)
Craftsmen burgesses	4 (5)	2 (3)	6 (4)
Burgesses	18 (23)	3 (5)	21 (15)
Unfree craftsmen	7 (9)	10 (17)	17 (12)
Professions	13 (16)	6 (10)	19 (14)
Landowners	3 (4)	4 (8)	7 (5)
Portioners/tenants	1 (1)	10 (17)	11 (8)
Indwellers	8 (10)	10 (17)	18 (13)
Others	3 (4)	1 (2)	4 (3)
Unknown	9 (11)	6 (10)	15 (11)
	79	56	138

Source and definitions as in Table 2.1.

If a study of merchant recruitment had been based entirely on these figures, the picture presented would be a different one from that already suggested. From Table 2.3, it would appear that merchants came largely from an urban instead of a rural background and that low status families accounted for less than 20% of the sample while landowners and substantial tenants formed an even smaller percentage of recruits for much of the period; both categories rose in the later years of the century.

Two main factors emerge from this analysis; firstly, that merchants were recruited from a variety of backgrounds and in ever-changing proportions for the period under review, and secondly, that small differences in the interpretation of the documents can lead to disproportionate alterations in the findings. The tentative conclusion, given these difficulties, is that a majority of merchant apprentices always came from the middle ranks of society, both urban and rural, and that this figure might have risen slightly from 1583-1699, but that a substantial minority of apprentices continued to be recruited from a group which consisted of journeymen craftsmen and

both urban and rural indwellers. Within the middle ranks, it would appear that both landowners and larger tenants increased their share of recruits at the expense of merchants and other burgesses.

Even this conclusion leaves questions unanswered. Why were more prospective merchants drawn from rural society as the seventeenth century progressed? Did this reflect an increased interest in commerce on the part of the lairds and gentry or was apprenticeship simply a means of ridding themselves of some of their surplus offspring?[1] Conversely, why were fewer merchant apprentices drawn from urban backgrounds? Did the capital city exert less of a 'pull' on burgess' sons of other burghs as time passed, or were there positive advantages to be gained in smaller urban communities? These are questions which can be posed but must remain unanswered.

There are few comparable studies of merchant apprentice recruitment for the larger English cities, although one of the historians of Exeter mentions that merchant apprentices were mostly recruited from outwith the town, usually from younger sons of good families, and the Southampton apprentice registers show that a high percentage of entrants were sons of the rural better-off.[2] Sons of merchants and gentlemen were also prominent among Bristol merchant recruits.[3] The Bristol figures are sufficiently comprehensive to allow comparisons

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1. T.C. Smout, "Scottish Landowners and Economic Growth 1650-1850", S.J.P.E., Xl, (1964) shows that landowners were becoming increasingly involved in projects outside agriculture.
2. W.G. Hoskins, "The Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter", in S. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C. Williams (eds.), Elizabethan Government and Society (London 1961), p.168 and P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), Introduction to Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700, (London 1972), p.17.
3. P. McGrath, Merchants and Merchandise in Seventeenth-Century Bristol, (Bristol Record Society 1955), p.276.

with Edinburgh but the fathers' occupations have been grouped into categories which make this difficult. 24% of Bristol apprentices were themselves the sons of merchants compared with only 7% for Edinburgh but the former figure undoubtedly includes merchants resident in the city whereas the latter does not. 28% of the Bristol survey were craftsmens' sons, 23% were the sons of gentlemen, 11% were unknown and the remainder were divided between yeomen (9%), husbandmen (5%) and others, including a bishop, (1%). No distinction is made between master craftsmen and journeymen, and no mention is made of professional men or of indwellers. The overall impression, nevertheless, is that Edinburgh merchants were recruited from a less homogeneous and less middle-class background than their Bristol counterparts.

No surveys of the social origins of craftsmen apprentices appear to exist for any large urban centres, English or Scottish. The following tables have been designed in the same way as those for merchant apprentices, method 1 using the entire sample, method 2 omitting all those without a specifically-acknowledged occupation.

TABLE 2.4 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF CRAFTSMEN APPRENTICES (1)
(percentages in brackets)

	1583-1666	1666-1699	Total
Merchants	6 (1)	9 (4)	15 (2)
Craftsmen burgesses	8 (2)	9 (4)	17 (3)
Burgesses	13 (3)	2 (1)	15 (2)
Unfree craftsmen	61 (14)	45 (19)	106 (16)
Professions	19 (4)	15 (6)	34 (5)
Landowners	29 (7)	29 (12)	58 (9)
Portioners/tenants	8 (2)	28 (12)	36 (5)
Indwellers (urban)	86 (20)	25 (11)	111 (17)
Indwellers (rural)	160 (37)	50 (21)	210 (32)
Others	9 (2)	6 (3)	15 (2)
Unknown	28 (7)	18 (8)	46 (7)
	427	236	663

Source: - as in previous tables.

One would expect to find a majority of craftsmen recruited from the lower ranks of society and this is borne out by the figures. The middle ranks, however, supplying almost one-fifth of the pre-1666 total, had doubled their share by the end of the century and much of the increase came from the landowner and larger tenant class. As one might expect, they tended to choose the most respectable crafts for their sons if they did not apprentice them to merchants. There are numerous instances of landowners' sons joining the ranks of surgeons, goldsmiths, and apothecaries, a few becoming apprentice booksellers, litsters, and wrights, fewer still dropping their sights to the level of masons or tailors. The problem of placing one's sons, or daughters, must have been a headache even in the seventeenth century. (One can sympathise with Mr. John Birnie of Broomhill, faced with the prospect of four sons to dispose of, and sense his ultimate relief when he registered the youngest, James, with a skipper burgess of Edinburgh.) It is nevertheless remarkable that William Borthwick, an advocate, should apprentice his son John to an Edinburgh cordiner in 1608, that Alexander Douglas, writer to the signet, should place his son with a saddler in 1643 and that Arthur Forbes, son of the Bishop of Aberdeen, should be apprenticed to a skinner in 1625.

Table 2.5 overleaf compares urban/rural and wealthy/less wealthy craftsmen apprentices in the same way as Table 2.2 for merchants. It will be noted that there is very little change in the balance between urban-based and rural-based craft apprentices over the century as a whole, although distinctions of this type, as already suggested, are somewhat artificial and very approximate in seventeenth-century Scotland.

The social origins of craftsmen apprentices have also been

TABLE 2.5 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF CRAFTSMEN APPRENTICES (percentages)

	1583-1666		1666-99			1583-1666	1666-99
Wealthy/higher status:					**Urban:**		
Merchants/crafts/burgesses	6)		8)		Merchants/crafts indwellers/legal	42	39
Landowners/tenants	9)	19	24)	38			
Professions	4)		6)				
Less wealthy/lower status:					**Rural:**		
Unfree craftsmen	14)	72	19)	51	Landowners/tenants indwellers/ministers	49	50
Indwellers	58)		32)				
Others/unknown	9		10		Others/unknown	9	10

Source and definitions as in Table 2.2

calculated by a second method to correspond with merchant figures.

TABLE 2.6 OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF CRAFTSMEN APPRENTICES (2)
(percentages in brackets)

	1583-1666	1666-1699	Total
Merchants	6 (3)	9 (6)	15 (4)
Craftsmen burgesses	8 (4)	9 (6)	17 (5)
Burgesses	13 (7)	2 (1)	15 (4)
Unfree craftsmen	61 (34)	45 (29)	106 (32)
Professions	19 (11)	15 (10)	34 (10)
Landowners	1 (1)	3 (2)	4 (1)
Portioners/tenants	8 (4)	28 (18)	36 (11)
Indwellers	27 (15)	21 (13)	48 (14)
Others	9 (5)	6 (4)	15 (4)
Unknown	28 (16)	18 (12)	46 (14)
	180	156	336

Source: - as in previous tables.

They indicate an urban rather than a rural bias but a considerable increase in the number of wealthier tenant fathers after 1666, similar findings to those for merchant apprentices.

Certain trends appear to hold good for merchant and craft apprentices and for both sets of figures, the entire sample of 937 names or the 474 remaining after questionable entries have been removed. The rise of the landowner/tenant class as a source of Edinburgh apprentices is apparent in all the tables. The proportions of low status backgrounds for merchant, and high status for craftsmen apprentices are both greater than might have been anticipated, somewhere in the range 25-35% of the whole for much of the century. This seems to suggest that ascending the social ladder in the capital city was certainly possible for an outsider. It also suggests that the Edinburgh burgess community could, in theory, replenish itself constantly both from below and from a geographically diverse area, urban and rural. Unfortunately, there is no way of ascertaining whether each category from the wide variety of apprentice recruits was

similarly represented when they eventually achieved burgess-ship.

It would be interesting to know what happened to the 8,000-odd lads who began apprenticeships in Edinburgh during the seventeenth century but the majority are completely untraceable. By checking the names of apprentices against those who entered the Burgess Roll by right of apprenticeship, it was found that less than 25% of the original sample of 937 actually became burgesses of the city. This seemed at first to be a very small proportion, and a further sample of 796 names, based on surnames beginning with the letter H, was studied, with the same result.[1] It is significant that a very similar pattern emerged from the Bristol apprentice registers and from the study of Norwich apprentice indentures, which showed that only 17% of apprentices definitely became freemen of the city.[2]

There are numerous reasons which could be advanced for this apparently high drop-out rate. Some apprentices might have failed to complete their period of indenture, although remarkably few cancellations are recorded, either in Bristol or Edinburgh. Taking the two Edinburgh sample groups together, a total of 1,700 names, less than 1% are registered as cancelled or deleted, although it is possible that some apprenticeships simply lapsed by consent of master and apprentice without being entered in the apprentice book. Some young men must have died before completing their training although, again, no mention is made of this in the register.

Other reasons have greater numerical significance. Many

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1. For sample letter H, between 22% and 25% of apprentices became burgesses by right of apprenticeship. Figures derived from Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren 1406-1700, ed. C.B.B. Watson, (S.R.S. 1929).
2. McGrath, op.cit., p.xi and Patten, op.cit., p.154.

Edinburgh apprentices gained their burgess ticket by some other right, notably by marrying their master's or some other freeman's daughter, and claiming burgess-ship through their wife. The burgh council stipulated that no apprentice could become a burgess until he had served his master or another freeman for a further three years after completing his training, unless he married a burgess' daughter, in which case he could claim his burgess-ship immediately.[1] A burgess was thereby assured of easy disposal of his female offspring, as the council intended, while an apprentice gained both a wife and a head-start on many of his peers. Large numbers of apprentices, however, must have been obliged to wait and might never have obtained sufficient capital to set themselves up in business; there is no way of telling how many fell into this category.

The final, and perhaps most cogent reason, brings us back to the migrant. Many apprentices, still young men after their training ended, probably moved on, either driven out by lack of opportunity or spurred on by thoughts of fortune-seeking, while others returned to their home town or district. We shall never know for certain as the records are silent.

Even those who stayed the course and joined the ranks of the burgess community had waited, on average, for longer than the minimum five to seven-year period of service. Of the original sample of 937 apprentices, 213 were traced in the Burgess Roll. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the average length of time which elapsed between apprentice entry and burgess-ship was twelve years for craftsmen, thirteen for merchants. For the second half of the

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1. Marwick, op.cit., p.146.

century, it was eleven years for craftsmen and ten for merchants. This raises a number of points. Firstly, it would appear that a young man could attain burgess-ship in a shorter period of time after 1650, a feature also common to prospective Norwich freemen.[1] This would be consistent with views expressed earlier - that some of the inflexibilities of the old guild and apprenticeship system were, if not being broken down, then at least being modified.

These figures also suggest that for the 30% of the burgess population who qualified by right of apprenticeship during the century, the age at burgess entry was probably around 25 years, which in turn would affect the span of their burgess career. They therefore tend to support the opinion already advanced that an 'average' burgess life was unlikely to be as high as 25 years, the figure suggested by Professor Smout for Glasgow burgesses, and that the age of burgess entry was probably more than 22, his figure again.[2] Although allowance has to be made for those who qualified by kinship at an earlier age (roughly 50% of the burgess entrants), the 15% who paid for their burgess-ship were probably of similar age or even older than apprentice entrants. A detailed study for Norwich freemen revealed that the average age of entry was 23 for those qualifying by patrimony, 26.6 for apprentices and 32 for those purchasing the privilege, and figures for all freemen admissions gave an average of 27 years before 1640 and 25.5 up to 1690.[3]

It therefore seems likely that roughly half of the burgess

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1. J.T. Evans, Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion and Government, 1620-1690, (Oxford 1979), p.10.
2. Smout, 'Merchant Community', p.61.
3. Evans, op.cit., p.10.

entrants, those who did not claim by kinship rights, were at a disadvantage at the beginning of their careers and might, on average, have had shorter working lives than the sons and sons-in-law of existing burgesses.

Parallel, and in many ways similar to a discussion of social mobility is that of occupational mobility. There are several questions to answer; what proportion of apprentices embarked on a different career from their fathers, what reasons lay behind this decision, and did the change in occupation result in an upwards, downwards or side-ways shift in status and potential wealth? The sample used, based as before on surnames beginning with the letter B, was roughly 400, since the fathers' occupations were unknown in the majority of cases. It would appear from this group that craftsmen apprentices had a very high occupational mobility, somewhere in the region of 90%, while 75% of merchant apprentices also sought a change of employment; these proportions, moreover, are very similar to figures for Norwich apprentices.[1] A bewildering interchange of occupations occurred - tailors' sons were apprenticed to cordiners, weavers, barbers, merchants, locksmiths and candlemakers but less than 20% intended to become tailors; maltmens' sons became wrights, pewterers, apothecaries, merchants, baxters, anything, it would seem but maltmen. The only craftsmen who regularly sent their sons into the same trade as themselves were wrights - 70% of them followed their fathers. In order to suggest possible reasons for these changes, it is necessary to look more closely at the motives behind apprenticeship to an Edinburgh burgess and the choices available.

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1. Patten, op.cit., p.158.

It seems highly probable that for the prospective apprentice living some distance from Edinburgh, there were two main avenues of entry to apprenticeship. A chance contact such as a business transaction between his father and a travelling merchant, for example, might have resulted in the negotiation of terms of indenture or at least the opportunity of finding out more about prospects in the city. Alternatively, it would appear that many families from farther-flung areas already had some connection with the capital city, a relative perhaps who had gone to seek his fortune there, and that apprenticeships were arranged in this way. Recent research on seventeenth-century Dumfries has highlighted these points and it will be demonstrated later in this chapter that contacts between Edinburgh and the south-west of Scotland were in fact greater than might have been expected.[1]

Acquaintances in the city were probably of great importance to the young apprentice but social contact only partly explains how a young man and his family chose a trade. Was it a case of necessity, of accepting what was available or was there a conscious decision to follow a particular career path? How great was competition for apprenticeships; were certain trades more popular than others and why; what possible job information was available to a seventeenth-century father from the 'landward parts'; and did wealth and status dictate whether a boy was apprenticed into one of the better trades? Some of these questions are easier to answer than others but on the whole, very little has been discovered about apprentices which is not

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1. W.K. Coutts, Social and Economic History of the Commissariot of Dumfries from 1600-1665 as disclosed by the Registers of Testaments , M.Litt., (Edinburgh 1982), pp.91-96.

contained in the registers themselves.

A number of sources indicate that obtaining an apprenticeship, particularly if one's family was not already part of the burgess community, was not altogether easy. A study of the trade gilds of York showed that entry to apprenticeship was often restricted, with any master forbidden to take more than one, or possibly two, apprentices at a time, and that not surprisingly the availability of apprenticeships was directly related to population change and economic conditions.[1] In periods of urban population growth or economic prosperity, freemen were anxious to limit entry in order to ensure places for their own sons. In Edinburgh, masters were restricted to one apprentice at a time according to burgh laws of the 1580s but it is not known whether this rule varied according to circumstances. The law was introduced at a time of considerable population increase and was probably enforced up to the middle years of the seventeenth century. One would like to know what impact the adverse economic conditions of the 1640s and 1650s had on this ruling, particularly the plague years, but these are the very years for which less information is available.

The popularity of different trades can be gauged from the recruitment figures. Chapter 1 indicated that the crafts of Edinburgh were divided into fourteen incorporations and that the fluctuations in yearly burgess admissions were probably linked to economic developments, a theme to which we will return later. A detailed examination of the crafts, their size, wealth and status forms the basis of

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1. D.M. Palliser, 'The Trade Gilds of Tudor York' in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.) Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700 (London 1972), p. 98.

Chapter 3 and includes an analysis of the occupational structure of the burgh. It can be argued, however, that the number of apprentice entrants into different crafts is a better indication of craft strength and popularity than the number of burgess entrants as it reflects current choices and opportunities and possible future trends in a craft's expansion or contraction.

The original sample of 663 craftsmen apprentices was used in an attempt to show the changing pattern of recruitment. Eliminating a few whose prospective trade was unknown and those registered between 1583 and 1599, left a figure of 573. Table 2.7 demonstrates the changes which took place over a hundred-year period.

TABLE 2.7 RECRUITMENT OF CRAFT APPRENTICES 1600-99

	1600-49			1650-99	
1.	Tailors	39 (15%)	1.	Surgeons	51 (16%)
2.	Hammermen	30 (12%)	2.	Wrights	44 (14%)
3.	Bonnetmakers	28 (11%)	3.	Hammermen	40 (12%)
4.	Cordiners	26 (10%)	4.	Bonnetmakers	27 (8%)
5.	Wrights	24 (9%)	5.	Baxters	23 (7%)
6.	Skinners	23 (9%)	6.	Skinners	23 (7%)
7.	Baxters	20 (8%)	7.	Masons	21 (7%)
8.	Weavers	15 (6%)	8.	Tailors	20 (6%)
9.	Masons	13 (5%)	9.	Cordiners	14 (4%)
10.	Surgeons	10 (4%)	10.	Fleshers	13 (4%)
11.	Fleshers	9 (4%)	11.	Weavers	8 (2%)
12.	Goldsmiths	4 (2%)	12.	Goldsmiths	4 (1%)
	Others	12 (4%)		Others	28 (9%)
		253			320

Source: as in previous tables.

There are considerable alterations in some craft fortunes, relative stability in others. The percentage figures for basic crafts, baxters, fleshers, skinners, are virtually static, reflecting their necessity to an urban community at any time in its history, but there is a significant rise in numbers entering the building and metal-work trades (masons, wrights, hammermen) and an even more

dramatic fall in entrants to clothing and associated trades (tailors, weavers, bonnetmakers and cordiners). These changes are illustrated in Table 2.8 and will be reinforced in figures for burgess entry in the following chapter.

TABLE 2.8 APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT IN CLOTHING AND BUILDING TRADES
(percentage of total craftsmen recruits in brackets)

	Clothing	Building
1600-09	255 (43)	21 (4)
1610-19	250 (43)	41 (7)
1620-29	216 (44)	36 (7)
1630-39	211 (42)	34 (7)
1640-49	243 (37)	53 (8)
1650-59	186 (37)	43 (8)
1660-69	165 (28)	69 (12)
1670-79	157 (23)	137 (20)

Source: as in previous tables.

The most spectacular rise in popularity, however, is reserved for the surgeon/apothecary craft, from a mere 4% of entrants during the first half of the century to 16% in the second half. Recent research on the foundation and growth of the Edinburgh medical school will confirm the increased numerical importance and power of the surgeon/apothecary in the later seventeenth century.[1]

It has to be assumed that the popularity of apprenticeships in certain crafts was a reflection of their availability, dependent on an increase in the number of masters willing and able to take apprentices. This would partly explain the high occupational mobility figures - an apprentice had to settle for whatever training was available at a price his father could afford. A growing number of

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1. Current research is being undertaken on this subject by Rosalie Stott of the Department of Economic History, University of Edinburgh.

apprentices in particular crafts pre-supposes an increased demand for the goods and services provided by the masters of those crafts (and at the same time, an increase in prosperity for craft members which would in turn generate a rise in the popularity of a craft). The examples given earlier of tailors' and wrights' sons are underlined by the figures in Tables 2.7 and 2.8 - the 'official' tailor's craft was contracting during the seventeenth century and required fewer apprentices while the number of wrights was expanding.

In the majority of cases, it is not possible to say whether a change of occupation resulted in a change of status and wealth, partly because so many recruits came from an uncertain rural background and partly because of the difficulty of ranking crafts. On the face of it, a move from a merchant's household to a flesher's was a downward shift in status and wealth, from a flesher's to a merchant's household an upward shift, but it depended entirely on the 'merchant' and flesher in question. It is impossible to decide whether it was advantageous to change from the baxters to the hatmakers, from a tailor to a cordiner, from a mealmaker to a cutler. A few examples suggest genuine upward mobility - a gardener's son becoming an apprentice apothecary, a maltman's son becoming an apprentice surgeon - and others seem to indicate a downward movement - from a goldsmith to a tailor, from a tailor to a blacksmith. All that can be said with certainty is that most youths ended up in a career which was different from that of their fathers.

Two final examples of craftsmen apprentices are worthy of comment. In 1674, the son of a 'coalhevir' in Tranent was apprenticed to an Edinburgh hatmaker and in 1685 the son of a smelter in Leadhills was apprenticed to a cooper. Both instances are interesting because

they show that a degree of choice and movement was still available to members of mining communities in the second half of the century. It has generally been accepted that coalminers were subjected to serfdom for most of the seventeenth century, and particularly after 1650, but the view that the practice never became universal is supported by this evidence.[1] Leadminers were enserfed only for part of the century, and were all released by 1700, as it was more difficult to enforce such an institution in an industry which relied heavily at this period on immigrant English labour.[2] It is, in fact, possible that the smelter in question was an Englishman, because most of the skilled labour was imported. It is nevertheless surprising that members of mining communities could aspire to the burgess-ship of Edinburgh.

The geographical mobility of apprentices can also be deduced from the register. A city of Edinburgh's size could have been expected to attract migrants from a far greater distance than other Scottish towns, but from which areas of Scotland in particular, and to what degree, did this occur? The 'pull' of Norwich was said to operate throughout much of England, especially from northern and western areas, and the East Anglian ports of Great Yarmouth and Ipswich attracted considerable coastal migration from afar.[3] Edinburgh, as regional capital and port, could have exerted an influence both coast-wise and overland, and the Register of Apprentices has been used to indicate which areas of Scotland provided the city with the majority of its young incomers. If special links can be shown between certain

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', pp.168-9; B. Duckham, A History of the Scottish Coal Industry 1700-1815, (Newton Abbot 1970), pp.241-8.
2. T.C. Smout, 'Lead Mining in Scotland, 1650-1850' in P.L. Payne, Studies in Scottish Business History (London 1967), pp.121-2.
3. Patten, op.cit., p.143.

districts and Edinburgh in respect of apprentices, it is equally possible that these links could have extended to other migrants and also to aspects of trade which might, in themselves, have encouraged subsequent social contacts. The limits of apprentice migration might be seen as the limits of Edinburgh's extensive hinterland.

It was decided to divide the country into six main regions for the purpose of this analysis:- Edinburgh district which included parishes such as Cramond and Duddingston, now within the city boundary but then a few miles distant; the Lothians which included the remainder of Midlothian together with East and West Lothian; Fife, treated separately as always; the eastern Borders from Peebles-shire to Berwick; the south-west which included Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, and the remaining border area; and the Central region which covered Lanarkshire, Glasgow, Stirlingshire and Clackmannan. No other region was mentioned often enough to warrant a separate entry but within the 'others' category were to be found four apprentices from Orkney, seven from Tayside, two from Caithness, three from the Moray Firth and two from Ireland. The unknowns consisted of those for whom no information was given or whose place of residence was untraceable. The figures are once more based on the sample letter B.

TABLE 2.9 DOMICILE OF EDINBURGH APPRENTICES 1583-1699 (percentages)

Region	A - all apprentices	B - merchant apprentices
Edinburgh	21	14
Lothians	20	16
Fife	6	9
Borders	7	7
South-west	5	6
Central	15	22
Others	4	6
Unknown	20	21

Source: as in previous tables.

It will be seen from column A that over 40% of apprentices came from Edinburgh and the Lothians and if one assumes that about half of the unknown group also lived in these areas, it would appear that roughly 50% were from the city and Lothians and 50% from further afield (remembering of course that the figures for Edinburgh exclude almost all the sons of burgesses). The most striking feature of the table is the size of the contingent from the Central and South-west areas, which accounted for almost double the number of recruits from Fife and the nearer Borders, and one-fifth of the whole. One would probably expect to find that migration declined steadily with distance from the city unless some special factors altered the pattern, and this was certainly true for Norwich. The situation for Edinburgh is more complex. It could be argued that Fife, with its numerous small trading burghs such as Kirkcaldy, Culross and Anstruther was too self-contained and too geographically separate to fall within Edinburgh's influence. The attractions of an apprenticeship and possibly a burgess-ship in Edinburgh might have been outweighed by the proximity of the coastal towns and the chance of an easier rise to moderate prosperity in a smaller burgh.

Nevertheless, Fife was only a short sea crossing from the capital. It would also have been a simple matter for a young man from Dundee or Aberdeen to sail to Leith aboard one of the many vessels engaged in coastal trade. That the vast majority chose not to do so indicates that both of these towns had their own sphere of influence which was not undermined by that of Edinburgh. The impact of sea transport on migration was negligible.

A possible explanation for the large number of migrants from Lanarkshire and the South-west also hinges on transport. Although

these regions were at a greater distance from the capital than Fife and the nearer Borders, parts of them straddled one of the few paved roads in seventeenth-century Scotland, from Leadhills to Edinburgh. This might have encouraged greater contact between the two areas than one would normally have expected and could account for the number of apprentices from towns such as Biggar, Symington, Lamington, Roberton and even Sanquhar. It is unlikely, however, to have made much impact on those who came from areas considerably further south, the bonnet-maker's son from Dumfries, the indweller of Wigtown and the minister's sons from Galloway, Nithsdale and Annan. It is possible that, in complete contrast to the situation in Fife, a lack of local opportunity in this area drove young people to try their luck in the city. While this might be true, it still does not explain why greater numbers of apprentices came from the south-west Borders than from the south-east Borders.

A glance at column B shows that, as a group, merchant apprentices came from further afield than craftsmen. Thomas Buchanan from Orkney sent all three of his sons to be apprenticed to Edinburgh merchants, as did Thomas Bruce, merchant burgess of Montrose, William Bisset, a skipper resident in Dieppe, William Baxter, writer in Aberdeen and Henry Bain from Caithness. These are, nevertheless, the exceptions rather than the rule. If we draw a circle of 50 miles radius around Edinburgh and eliminate the unknown 20% from the calculations, fully 87% of apprentices, merchant and craftman, came from within the area and only 13% from beyond. If we make comparisons with Bristol, for which similar figures exist, we find that almost 25% of its apprentices were recruited from outwith a 50-mile radius of the city, a reflection perhaps of the improved communications network which

existed in many parts of England, both by road and water.[1]

Assuming that most apprentices would walk to Edinburgh and that approximately twenty miles was the maximum distance which could be travelled in any one day, a circle of twenty miles radius was also drawn around the city. This area extends from North Berwick in the east, almost as far as Grangemouth in the west, and from Falkland in the middle of Fife almost as far as Peebles in the south. From this area came 56% of the recruits. A distance of between twenty and fifty miles from the city, at least two days walk, takes in most of the nearer Borders, the Glasgow area, the whole of Lanarkshire, Stirlingshire and the remainder of Fife, and only excludes the south-west Borders, Ayrshire, Tayside and further north. This area furnished 30% of the recruits.

In conclusion, we can say that over 50% of apprentices were likely to come from within a day's walk of Edinburgh but that a surprisingly high proportion, nearly 45%, came from further afield.

Finally, the numbers of merchant and craft apprentices have been set out in Figure 2 to show the fluctuations in recruitment during the century and to offer a comparison with burgess admissions. There are many similarities between burgess and apprentice recruitment - a drop in the number of entrants in 1604, 1624-5, 1639-40, 1645, 1651, 1660, and peaks in 1641-2 and 1646-7. Each of these fluctuations was connected with a specific event or events in national or local history and would tend to reinforce the theory that recruitment was influenced in the short-term by particular incidents. There would appear to be differences, however, in the trends of apprentice admissions, with a

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1. McGrath, op.cit., p. 275-6.

steady increase in the number of merchant apprentices throughout the period to 1680 and greater fluctuations in the levels of craftsmen recruits, indicating perhaps that the latter were more responsive to changes in the economy. A closer analysis of these trends will be left until a later chapter.

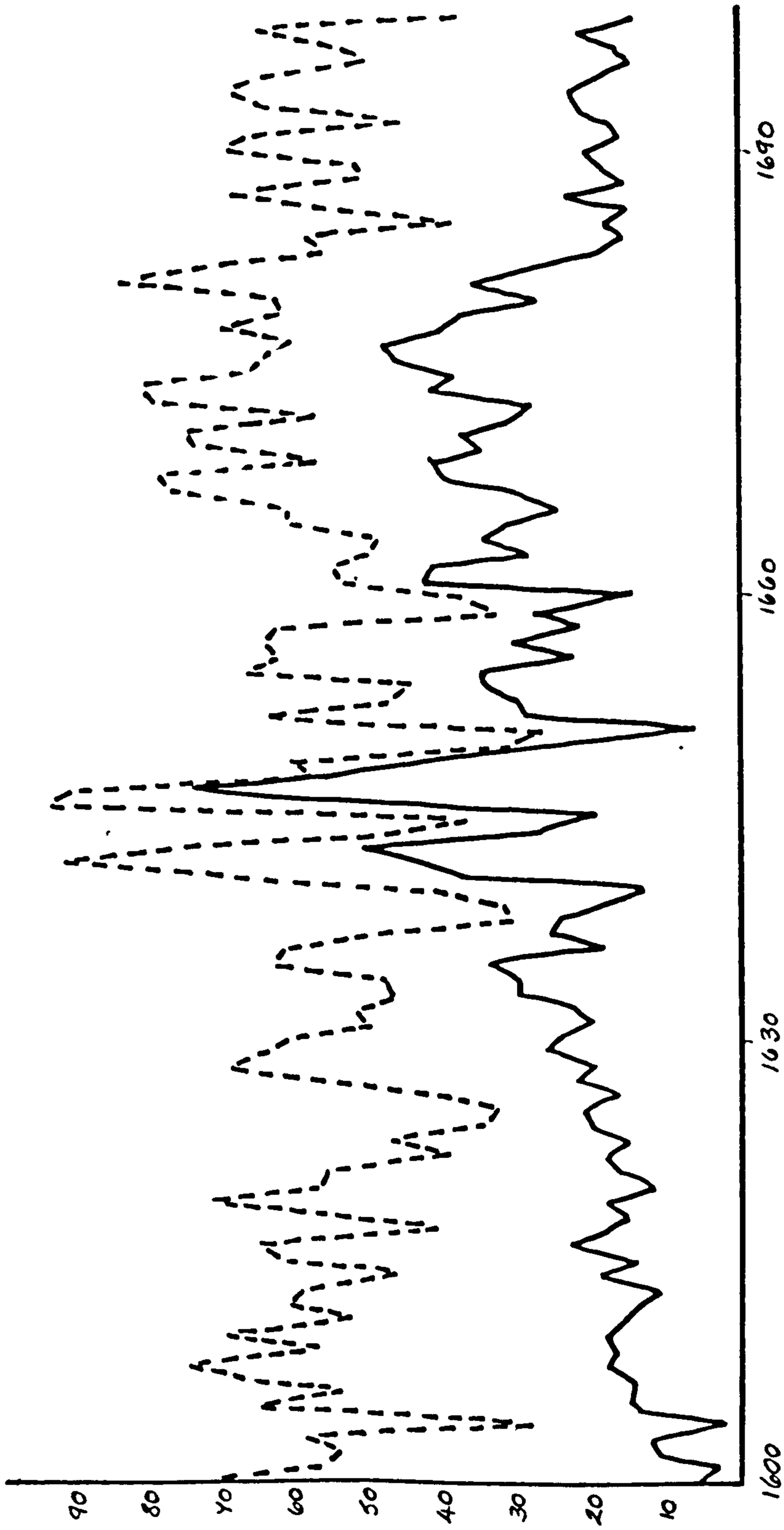
MERCHANTS
CRAFTSMEN
APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT
1600
1630
1660
1690
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10

FIGURE 2 -

CHAPTER 3 MERCHANT AND CRAFT WEALTH

The burgess community of Edinburgh, as we have seen, consisted overwhelmingly of merchants and craftsmen. Up to this point we have been more concerned with its external relationships - its size and position in relation to the city of Edinburgh and its populace, and to the freemen communities of other towns - and with the internal workings of burgess society than with its members, groups or individuals. It is now time to focus attention on the burgesses themselves, and in particular, on their economic condition in the seventeenth century. It has already been suggested that the 'average' burgess was difficult to define because he was too ordinary to appear in most official records. Many exceedingly ordinary people, however, left wills and part of this chapter will consider samples of burgess' testaments for certain decades of the century.

Differences and similarities between merchants and craftsmen have also been touched upon but will now be developed. Neither merchants nor craftsmen were homogeneous groups; as we have seen, they came from all types of background and became many sorts of traders and artisans, but craftsmen are more easily defined. They formed the poorer, inferior and normally larger part of any burgess community - in the case of Edinburgh it has been shown that they sometimes outnumbered merchants by almost two to one - and considerable detail about their numbers and range of occupations can be derived from the Burgess Roll.

A craftsman of the sixteenth century was an artisan who made goods to order and was only entitled to sell his own surplus wares directly to the customer. After the decreet-arbitral of 1583, a craftsman burgess could join the merchant guild and was then allowed

to trade more freely but restrictions were frequently placed on his activities and craftsmen on the whole remained the socially inferior group of burgesses. In Edinburgh, they were organised into fourteen incorporations whose inception dated from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Each craft was responsible for the quality of its products as well as for the conduct of its members and, although some of its objectives were charitable, it was mainly concerned with the enforcement of regulations within its own sphere of influence, in particular, with upholding the rights of its burgess members against the unfree craftsmen of the town or its suburbs. Each individual craft resembled the entire burgess community in its composition - a body in which a large majority of less privileged members, the craft servants (either apprentices or journeymen) were presided over by a small, powerful two-tier minority, consisting firstly of master craftsmen who were burgesses, and secondly of burgesses who were also full members of the guild.

The fourteen trade groups varied considerably in size, wealth, status and membership. Some, like the goldsmiths, were small, reputedly rich and exclusive; others, like the hammermen, were large, embracing a wide variety of different crafts within their organisation, from saddlers and lorimers to clockmakers and at least half a dozen groups of smiths; and the bonnetmakers, reckoned to be one of the poorest crafts, nevertheless incorporated the litsters or dyers, generally a more affluent group.[1] As society evolved during the centuries and new services and occupations emerged, the original

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1. Details of membership of the fourteen incorporated trades to be found in J. Colston, The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh 1891).

incorporations became anachronistic as well as conservative, bastions of privilege which were open to circumvention by those who could not or would not be amalgamated within the existing craft framework. There appeared to be, for example, no guild in Edinburgh to look after the interests of the growing number of brewers, maltmen and vintners although the maltsters of Glasgow were the second largest guild in the city and the brewer's craft was said to be one of the most influential in Edinburgh.[1] This is perhaps one reason why the Society of Brewers was formed in 1596 to concern itself with all aspects of the trade, even though its lack of formal incorporation barred its members from participation in the town council. Stablers were another numerous and expanding group in the seventeenth century who lacked political power as did members of the embryo printing trade and its associates, the bookbinders, booksellers and stationers. It is possible that all these trades were affiliated to some of the original fourteen incorporations but no evidence has been found to support this.

Further confusion occurs because of the existence of separate though apparently subservient trade guilds in Leith, the port of Edinburgh.[2] These included maltmen, brewers, skippers, porters and traffickers, and seemed to embrace practically all the working people of the town. Some, including the traffickers or merchants, required prior membership of the Edinburgh burgess community but thereafter

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.161 and I. Donnachie, A History of the Brewing Industry in Scotland (1979), p.2
2. For details of Leith trade incorporations see J. Russell, The Story of Leith (London 1922), pp.118-33 and J.S. Marshall, A Social and Economic History of Leith in the Eighteenth Century, (unpublished Ph.d., Edinburgh 1969), Chapter 3, passim.

were open to anyone whose business was in Leith; others such as the maltmen controlled entry by ballot to exclude undesirables. The likelihood of guild membership overlapping in Edinburgh and Leith serves to emphasise the complexity of burgess and guild organisation by the seventeenth century. The rights and privileges of various groups and the conflicts between them positively encouraged evasion and disregard of rules and pointed to the eventual demise of the system in the future.

Notwithstanding such criticisms, the crafts remained a powerful and influential force for much of the period under review, as evidenced by the numbers who continued to strive for membership of each incorporation. Attempts to rank them by size, wealth and status in the sixteenth century have relied on a few isolated documents but for the seventeenth century a clearer picture emerges from a number of printed and manuscript sources. The relative size of the sixteenth century crafts of Edinburgh is somewhat uncertain, based as it is on an incomplete Muster Roll of 1558 which omits three of their number (fleshers, wrights and masons were unaccounted for). Their status is indicated by the ability of their members to gain access to council positions and their relative wealth is given in tax rolls for the 1560s and 1570s, the final figure for 1574 altered to take account of newly prospering or 'decayitt' crafts.[1] Thereafter, craftsmen were taxed as individuals not corporately. The three following tables rank crafts according to their size as shown in the Muster Roll, their

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1. Figures for the Muster Roll and tax rolls are printed in J. Marwick, Edinburgh Guilds and Crafts,(S.B.R.S. 1909), p.90-1 and p.110. Council lists are printed in Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, (E.R.B.E.), relevant volumes.

wealth according to the 1574 tax roll and their status according to the frequency with which their deacons became full council members.

TABLE 3.1

MUSTER ROLL 1558	TAX ROLL 1574	COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP
1. Tailors	1. Skinners and Furriers*	1. Tailors
2. Hammermen	2. Tailors	2. Hammermen
3. Baxters(bakers)	3. Baxters	3. Goldsmiths
4. Skinners	4. Hammermen	4. Skinners
5. Bonnetmakers	5. Fleshers	5. Surgeons/barbers
6. Cordiners	6. Wrights	6. Furriers
7. Waulkers	7. Masons	7. Cordiners
8. Weavers	8. Cordiners	(Other crafts never mentioned)
9. Barbers	9. Goldsmiths	* Furriers had amalgamated with skinners
10. Goldsmiths	10. Barbers and Surgeons	
11. Furriers	11. Weavers	
(Fleshers, masons and wrights not mentioned)	Waulkers	
	Bonnetmakers	

The four crafts of tailor, hammerman, skinner and baxter appeared from the above to be both the most numerous and the wealthiest in the later sixteenth century, although the baxters tax rating fell from £17 12s. in every £100 Scots to £13 0s.4d. in the 1574 assessment; and while the surgeons/barbers, the goldsmiths and the furriers were among the smallest craft groups, their respectability in sixteenth-century society (and perhaps their clientele) ensured their deacons a permanent place on the council together with the senior tailor, hammerman and skinner. These six almost invariably filled the craft councillor places, with the occasional inclusion of the senior cordiner, demonstrating that the composition of the council in fact altered little in the years immediately before and after the decreet-arbitral.

Gradual changes, however, took place in the status of crafts in the seventeenth century. Up to 1650, the cordiners alone managed to obtain a permanent place on the council, ousting the furriers who had

amalgamated with the skinners and dwindled to a very small group. The remaining five places still went to the deacons of the tailors, hammermen, goldsmiths, surgeons and skinners, but after 1650 other crafts began to share in positions of power. The hammermen were eclipsed by the wrights as a permanent force in the council chambers, and the masons and baxters occasionally provided council members, but a stigma remained to deny fleshers, weavers, waulkers and bonnetmakers the opportunity of joining the ranks of the ruling body.

A further illustration of status consciousness in the burgess community is provided by the wording of the decreet-arbitral. Referring to the apprentice dues payable at the beginning and end of each apprenticeship, which were unchanged throughout the seventeenth century, it states, "Be ressun everie industrie is nocht of lyke valour and substance, it is declairit quhat ilk rank or degrie of prenteissis sall pay...."[1] The grades were as follows - merchant apprentices and "sik kynd of people as were wont to extent with thame, and ar nocht under ane of the said fourteen crafts" formed the top rank and paid the most money. The second group consisted of the apprentices of skinners, surgeons, goldsmiths, tailors, hammermen, cordiners, baxters and fleshers, the third comprised masons and wrights and finally, weavers, waulkers, furriers and bonnetmakers made up the lowest grade and paid the least.

Finally, a craft's ability to exercise some influence in council matters is likely to be paralleled, in terms of status, by its members' success in achieving guild brotherhood. The following tables set out those crafts which had the greatest number of guild members

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1. Marwick, op.cit., p.131.

and their percentage of the total guildry of Edinburgh for both halves of the seventeenth century. They might serve to reflect something of a craft's relative wealth and standing in the burgess community, since the acquisition of guild membership seemed to encompass elements of status and wealth as well as more tangible benefits. It will be remembered that almost twice as many craftsmen became guild members in the second half of the century as in the first, so that larger numbers of goldsmiths, baxters and litsters actually produced lower percentage ratings in the second column.

TABLE 3.2 CRAFT GUILD MEMBERSHIP IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY (percentages)

1600 - 49		1650 - 99	
1. Tailors	29	1. Tailors	14
2. Skinners	10	2. Wrights	9
3. Goldsmiths	7	3. Apothecaries	9
4. Surgeons	6	4. Surgeons	8
5. Apothecaries (affiliated to surgeons)	6	5. Skinners	5
		6. Goldsmiths	5
6. Baxters	6	7. Litsters	5
7. Litsters (affiliated to bonnetmakers	6	8. Baxters	5
		9. Brewers	4
8. Cordiners	4	10. Wigmakers (affiliated to barbers/surgeons)	4
9. Wrights	3		
10. Pewterers (hammermen)	2	11. Cordiners	3
11. Booksellers	2	12. Vintners	3
12. Masons	2		---
	---		74
	83	64 crafts represented, others included stationers, stablers, masons, maltmen, pewterers.	
41 crafts represented, others included brewers, maltmen, printers.			

Source:- Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren.

The absence of weavers, waulkers, fleshers and bonnetmakers from the above would seem to confirm that these were regarded as the lowliest craft groups, with the exception of the litsters, affiliated to the bonnetmakers but not apparently sharing their humble stature. All of the preceding information regarding status shows that an informal hierarchy of crafts undoubtedly existed and that it altered

little over a period of a hundred years. Most of the crafts which were held in high esteem at the end of the sixteenth century retained their position, while none of the lowliest groups was enabled to rise; only the wrights appeared to increase their prestige substantially as the years progressed. It also seems that members of 'new' crafts, brewers and wigmakers for example, were able to establish themselves among the prestigious group in the second half of the century but the numbers involved in many of the 'new' trades were very small.

The relative sizes of the seventeenth-century craft guilds can be established from the Burgess Roll and are as follows:-

TABLE 3.3 TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CRAFT GUILDS OF EDINBURGH 1600-99.

1600 - 49		1650 - 99		1600 - 99	
1. Tailors	449	1. Tailors	298	1. Tailors	747
2. Skinners	210	2. Wrights	276	2. Hammermen	442
3. Baxters	204	3. Hammermen	250	3. Skinners	432
4. Hammermen	192	4. Skinners	221	4. Wrights	428
5. Bonnetmakers	172	5. Baxters	212	5. Baxters	416
6. Wrights	152	6. Surgeons	181	6. Bonnetmakers	328
7. Weavers	141	7. Bonnetmakers	156	7. Fleshers	278
8. Cordiners	128	8. Fleshers	152	8. Cordiners	256
9. Fleshers	126	9. Cordiners	128	9. Surgeons	256
10. Masons	94	10. Masons	117	10. Weavers	228
11. Surgeons	75	11. Weavers	87	11. Masons	211
12. Goldsmiths	51	12. Goldsmiths	50	12. Goldsmiths	101
	1994		2128		4123
Non-guild membership					
Stablers	66	Stablers	89	Stablers	155
Maltmen, brewers and vintners	73	Maltmen, brewers and vintners	124	Maltmen, brewers and vintners	197
Booksellers/binders, stationers, printers	30	Booksellers/binders, stationers, printers	59	Booksellers/binders, stationers, printers	89
Skippers	10	Skippers	34	Skippers	44
Miscellaneous	57	Miscellaneous	43	Miscellaneous	100
	2231		2477		4708

Source:- Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren.

The above list of craft guilds illustrates the simple requirements of day-to-day life in a seventeenth-century burgh where the need for food, shelter and clothing predominated, and the composition and proportionate size of the individual craft groups is typical of many urban communities, including Glasgow.[1] Even a city of Edinburgh's size and sophistication could support only a handful of specialist craftsmen - gunsmiths, jewellers, perfumers, watchmakers and a solitary coachmaker. It was probably as easy to send to London or the Low Countries for more unusual items and luxuries than it was to procure them locally - there would be a greater choice and probably a higher standard of workmanship than was available in Scotland. There were notable exceptions, however. Golf enthusiasts purchased their equipment from certain local specialists who were given sole rights of manufacture, including Walter Scott, the son-in-law of a saddler who was made a burgess in 1611 as a 'golfballmaker' and William Mayne who was appointed maker of bows, arrows and golf clubs to the King in 1603.

Of greater relevance than the overall size of the crafts is the change in their numerical importance over the century. It has been suggested that the admissions to the freedom of particular crafts provide an index of the prosperity of urban manufactures [2]; and the levels of total craft admissions have already been linked with specific events in a previous chapter and will be used later as an indicator of Edinburgh's economic progress over the hundred year period. One of the surprising features to emerge from Table 3.3 is

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.161.
2. I.S.W. Blanchard, "Population Change, Enclosure and the Early Tudor Economy", E.H.R. 23, (1970), p.445.

the small increase in overall numbers of craftsmen when set against the rate of population growth in the seventeenth century. Previous estimates suggested an increase of over 20% in Edinburgh's population in the sixty years between the 1630s and 1690s, whereas craft numbers in this period increased by only 10% and merchants not at all. Another feature is the dramatic fall in those engaged in the clothing trades and the corresponding rise in metal workers and their associates. Services also attracted greater numbers while those engaged in food and general household wares remained stable.

The rise in prosperity of some crafts reflected changing tastes and fashion - periwigmakers (affiliated to barbers and therefore to the surgeon guild) began to appear in the 1670s and quickly established themselves, while increased numbers of glassenwrights (glaziers) and slaters pointed to new methods and materials in the construction trades. The falling numbers of tailors and weavers at a time when the population was rising suggests that fewer of the poorest craftsmen in this field bothered to become burgesses but chose instead to work as unfreemen in the suburbs, outwith the restrictions of the guild. The fact that none of the basic crafts expanded to keep pace with the population increase (baxters, skinners, candlemakers and cordiners changed very little over the period) would tend to support the view that an increasing amount of simple craftwork was being done illegally within or without the city walls, in spite of pressure from the council.

Other growing crafts appeared to indicate changes in the economy and in industrial processes. The fourfold increase in tanners in the second half of the century and the doubling in number of litsters implied a growth in the finishing trades, when previously raw hides

and undyed cloth were commonly exported. Edinburgh was not noted as a centre of the cloth industry and the rise of groups such as the litsters runs contrary to opinion; nor was the city thought to be a centre for leather goods or any product of the cattle trade.[1] Although geographically distant from the major cloth and cattle producing regions of the south-west and north-east, it seems possible that Edinburgh was becoming a processing centre for products such as these from a far-flung rural hinterland. Links with the south-west have already been noted and the pastoral areas of the north-east were only a short sea voyage away. Information from customs records confirms a thriving export of hides from Leith in the early years of the century together with a steady import of dyestuffs; an increase in the numbers working in finishing trades would seem to suggest that Edinburgh was increasingly providing services of this type for rural areas.

As the rise in prosperity of certain crafts reflected changes in taste and fashion, so the opposite process was also true. The rapid increase in the consumption of locally produced ale and changes, presumably, in the structure of the brewing industry, led to a decline in the numbers of maltmen and an increase in the number of brewers, and both marikenmakers and pantonheelmakers (manufacturers of fancy leather gloves and heeled shoes) disappeared, together with copsellers - makers of wooden bowls, no doubt replaced by pewter ones since the number of pewterers doubled in the second half of the century.

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1. T.C. Smout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union 1660-1707 (Edinburgh 1963), p.133.

The rise in the number of people employed in service industries is another feature of the years after 1650. Stablers and horsehirers increased by 50% to become one of the largest individual groups, apothecaries doubled in number, vintners and innkeepers increased ten-fold, and gravemakers appeared for the first time in the Burgess Roll. While practitioners such as surgeons and apothecaries had to join the guild, those engaged in many of the unskilled occupations were not obliged to become burgesses in order to work. It is therefore possible that similar numbers of them existed in the first half of the century but that they remained outwith the burgess community. Why, then, did they seek the freedom of the burgh in later years - was it for reasons of status or because they were for the first time sufficiently wealthy to do so, or because they were able to take advantage of the liberal policy of issuing gratis burgess tickets after 1650? It certainly does not appear that the last-mentioned was an important factor. Of the stablers, gravemakers and coachmen who became burgesses in the period 1650-99, only 10% received their membership free, while roughly 70% paid for the privilege, the remainder qualifying by right of their fathers-in-law. The fact that so many purchased the freedom of the burgh tends to support the theory, used earlier to explain the rise in members of the guildry, that the price of burgess- ship, which remained virtually static throughout the seventeenth century, was no longer such an important barrier to entry, and that the whole concept of burgess-ship and guildry was becoming devalued. If we accept this point of view, the increasing size of the tertiary sector in late seventeenth-century Edinburgh may only reflect the greater availability of burgess-ship to indwellers of the city, not a substantial change in the composition of

Edinburgh's working population. The capital city had always been a service centre; whether it became more or less service-orientated during the seventeenth century is a matter for conjecture.

There is no doubt, however, about the ever-increasing number of crafts practised within the burgh. The post-Restoration period not only saw the advent of periwigmakers, gravemakers and a coachmaker; it saw the arrival of a variety of lesser trades, or at least greater definition within an existing field. Ribbon weavers and silk weavers were listed for the first time - perhaps they had been general weavers before but were now able, or found it necessary, to specialise. Upholsterers and engravers were mentioned, an instrument maker, a button mould maker and a stocking frame maker, white ironsmiths and stationers, a distiller and a cheesemonger, together with tobacco cutters, tobacco spinners and a tobacco seller. Between them, they accounted only for a very small number of craftsmen but they indicated the beginnings of local production of items which were probably imported in previous years.

Finally, by calculating (from Table 3.3) the percentage membership of craft guilds, together with brewers and 'book trades' for which similar information is available, and relating it to the size of the craft burgess community throughout the seventeenth century, it is possible to arrive at an approximate number of craft masters in any of the fourteen trades at one point in time. The figures are based on the assumption, made in Chapter 1, that there were around 1,000 craft burgesses in the years up to 1650 and roughly 1,200 in the following fifty years. It is also possible to compare the Edinburgh list with a similar one for Glasgow in 1604, when the latter probably had a population about one-third of the size of the

capital.[1]

TABLE 3.4 APPROXIMATE SIZES OF CRAFT GUILDS IN EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW

	Edinburgh		Glasgow
	1600-49	1650-99	1604
Tailors	210	156	65
Skinners	100	120	20-30
Baxters	100	108	20-30
Hammermen	90	132	20-30
Bonnetmakers	80	84	12
Wrights	70	144	20-30
Weavers	70	48	20-30
Cordiners	60	72	50
Fleshers	60	84	17
Masons	40	60	11
Surgeons	40	96	2
Goldsmiths	20	24	-
Maltmen	30	60	55
Book trades	10	36	-
Approximate craft populations:	1000	1200	361
Approximate burgh populations:	22000	27000	7-8000

Sources:- Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren and T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People, p.161.

It would appear that Glasgow had proportionately the same number of tailors, wrights, masons and weavers as Edinburgh and similar proportions of fleshers, skinners, baxters and hammermen. The main differences were in the large number of cordiners and maltmen in Glasgow and the greater importance of surgeons and goldsmiths to Edinburgh, indicating perhaps an early bias towards industry in one city and services/professions in the other.

Unfortunately, no other comparisons can be made with craftsmen in other Scottish burghs, neither with regard to numbers of individuals nor diversity of trades. Little has been printed concerning the

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.161.

trades of Scotland's other major towns and it is felt that the Burgess and Apprentice Rolls of other Scottish burghs could usefully be investigated if for no other reason than to demonstrate how typical a pattern is provided by Edinburgh. Was the city simply a larger version of the average Scottish burgh or was its structure noticeably different because of its various roles as capital city, centre of government and regional distribution point?

Considerable research has been carried out on the occupational structure of English towns in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries using a variety of sources but notably freemens' and apprentice rolls, taxation lists and wills.[1] Much criticism has been levelled at the use of freemens' rolls in particular, as it is said that they provide only an approximate and highly selective view of the major trades of any town.[2] All the above sources are open to a further criticism - that they only record the major (and the legal) occupation of any person and take no account of any seasonal, part-time or dubious employment which he may have undertaken. It has already been suggested that in the case of Edinburgh, the unfree or illegal trading community was probably concentrated in the more basic trades - the higher the craft status, the less likely were its members to evade (or be able to evade) burgess-ship. Furthermore, Edinburgh was not an important manufacturing centre with a high percentage of

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1. Examples include J.F. Pound, 'Social and Trade Structure of Norwich 1525-75', Past and Present 34, 1966 and M. Reed, 'Economic Structure and Change in Seventeenth-Century Ipswich' in P. Clark (ed.), Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England (1981).
2. P. Corfield, 'A Provincial Capital in the late Seventeenth Century - the Case of Norwich' in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700, p.274 and J. Patten, 'Urban Occupations in Pre-Industrial England', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 1977,p.298.

its craftsmen engaged in, for example, the cloth industry; and it was in industries such as this that there was the greatest scope for the unfree craftsman. In spite of the criticism advanced, it is felt that burgess or freemens' rolls still offer a good guide to the range and approximate size of craft occupations in relation to each other. Having seen the difficulties encountered by historians of English towns in constructing and defining occupational tables, it was decided that the simple lists of Edinburgh's crafts based on the trade incorporations of the city (Table 3.3) would suffice, leaving the merchants to be dealt with separately.

Information about the crafts has so far been limited to a discussion of their overall and comparative size, their status and their corporate wealth. What of the individual craftsman? Is it possible to paint a picture of the 'average' baxter or cordiner, goldsmith or surgeon, and how did the financial position of craft members change over the years? These and other questions can be answered by an examination of batches of testaments at different periods of the century.

The testaments recorded in the registers of the Commissary Court of Edinburgh provide a wealth of information about individuals at a specific point in time. Anyone who died, leaving unfinished business, debts or obligations owed to him was legally obliged to have his testament registered and confirmed, preferably within six months of his death, in order that his family might recover any money owed. As a result, any person who was actively involved in buying, selling or money lending should have had his will recorded, as well as anyone who was owed money, from the most affluent merchant to the humblest craftsman or servant.

There are between 5,500 and 6,000 Edinburgh wills registered with the Commissary Court during the seventeenth century, together with a large number from outwith the city. Of these, over 2,000 pertained to merchant burgesses of Edinburgh, and 1,500 to craftsmen burgesses; the remainder covered indwellers, widows, children, servants and others. The format of each will is virtually standard. After an initial preamble which notes the name, status and occupation of the deceased and frequently his date of death, as well as the date when his will was recorded, there follows an inventory of his goods, a list of the debts owed to him and by him, some arithmetical calculations which give the balance of his estate (not always accurately) and sometimes a list of his legacies. The testament contains no information about land or houses owned by the deceased (this was handled by the civil courts), although it does include rents from property and crops sown on land, and it seldom contains details of his household goods or personal effects such as clothing - these are normally given in a lump sum at the end of the inventory. What it lists in abundance are a tradesman's stock in hand, his shares in ships or other ventures and frequently a vast and complex debt structure. This information is particularly copious and valuable in the case of merchants; for craftsmen, there is sometimes little except the bare bones.

A number of criticisms can be directed towards the use of wills as a means of analysing the wealth of individuals or groups, or of comparing levels of prosperity at different periods of time. Most importantly, a will can only provide a picture of a man's circumstances at one point in his life and this is seldom the point at which his career is most advantageously presented. Apparently wealthy men, dying suddenly, might leave massive debts because of the on-going

nature of their business commitments while formerly wealthy men, surviving to old age or impoverished by sickness, might leave only a fraction of the assets which they held in their prime. While examples of such men can be found, there are a great number of obviously active trading people recorded, who died when their businesses were still flourishing. On the positive side, there are also numerous instances of a person's estate being entered in the registers twice, sometimes even three or four times. This occurred if a man's spouse predeceased him; their joint estate was then assessed and recorded at the time of her death and this performance was repeated for every wife he took, and subsequently lost - an indictment, perhaps, of the standards of obstetrics and gynaecology in the seventeenth century. As a result of this practice, a picture can be obtained of a man's business affairs at two or three different points in his career, a feature which makes the use of testaments very valuable in the assessment of wealth.

Because less detail is available, or probably ever existed, for the vast majority of craftsmen, it was decided to look at their economic circumstances largely from the point of view of the crafts they represented rather than as individuals. A total of 749 testaments was examined, one for every six craftsmen burgesses enrolled throughout the century; the samples covered four decades and were studied in two ways, occupationally and chronologically. The main aims were firstly to discover which crafts were the wealthiest and to compare the findings with those already cited for the sixteenth century, and to form an impression of how much the 'average' member of each craft incorporation was worth; and secondly, to see whether a detailed study of craft (and later, merchant) testaments at different

points in time could tell us something about the fluctuating fortunes of Edinburgh's economy throughout the century. The testaments, covering forty years in all, were chosen from the first twenty years of the period - and, assuming a burgess life of 20-25 years, would therefore relate to people whose careers were built in the final years of the sixteenth century - the 1640s, relating largely to careers developed in the 1620s and 1630s, and the 1670s, covering those whose business lives spanned the troubled middle years of the century. The value of estates recorded during the three periods will be compared to see whether they indicate buoyancy, stability or decline in the local economy. They will also be compared with groups of merchant testaments to see if the same patterns recur.

Although an 'average' craft estate is a somewhat meaningless concept, it would be useful as a yardstick against which to measure individual craft wealth. From these figures, it would appear that over 50% of craftsmen left less than £500 when they died, and nearly 90% left less than £2,500. The 'average' craftsman was probably worth between £100 and £1,000.

TABLE 3.5 WEALTH OF EDINBURGH CRAFTSMEN FROM THEIR TESTAMENTS
(Percentages in brackets)

Negative	44	(6)
£0-100	96	(13)
£101-500	267	(36)
£501-1000	131	(17)
£1001-2500	124	(17)
£2501-5000	52	(7)
£5001-10000	26	(3)
over £10000	9	(1)
	749	

Source:- Commissary Court of Edinburgh, Register of Testaments.

The testaments for each craft group have also been tabulated overleaf to see whether they relate approximately to the size of

crafts, as given in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.6 TOTAL CRAFT MEMBERSHIP COMPARED WITH TOTAL CRAFT TESTAMENTS
(Percentages in brackets)

	Craft burgesses			Testaments		
1.	Tailors	747	(16)	Tailors	130	(17)
2.	Hammermen	442	(10)	Baxters	107	(14)
3.	Skinners	432	(9)	Maltmen	85	(11)
4.	Wrights	428	(9)	Fleshers	57	(8)
5.	Baxters	416	(9)	Skinners	56	(7)
6.	Bonnetmakers	328	(7)	Hammermen	53	(7)
7.	Fleshers	278	(6)	Wrights	45	(6)
8.	Cordiners	256	(6)	Surgeons/apoth.	43	(6)
9.	Surgeons/apoth.	256	(6)	Bonnetmakers	40	(5)
10.	Weavers	228	(5)	Masons	38	(5)
11.	Masons	211	(5)	Cordiners	34	(5)
12.	Maltmen	197	(4)	Weavers	23	(3)
13.	Goldsmiths	101	(2)	Book trades	21	(3)
14.	Book trades	89	(2)	Goldsmiths	17	(2)
		4564			749	

Sources:- Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren and Register of Testaments.

For some crafts there are more testaments than might have been expected (maltmen, fleshers, baxters), for others, there are few compared with the numbers of craft members (hammermen, skinners, wrights). It seems likely that there was a higher incidence of registration of wills by members of richer trade groups and a lower incidence by members of poorer groups but while this situation could have been expected, it cannot be proved.

Details of all the craft testaments have been summarized in Appendix 1. In order to rank the crafts according to the wealth of their members, each incorporation was tested against the 'average' given in Table 3.5 on the basis that over 50% of individuals were worth less than £500, that a majority of craftsmen had assets of between £100 and £1000 and that roughly 10% left more than £2,500. The findings are tabulated overleaf and suggest a wide range of

prosperity with few crafts achieving an overall 'average'.

TABLE 3.7 WEALTH OF EDINBURGH CRAFTSMEN FROM THEIR TESTAMENTS
(percentages)

Craft	Less than £500	£100-1,000	More than £2,500
Baxters	58	58	12
Bonnetmakers	49	37	13
Book trades	48	24	34
Cordiners	70	49	3
Fleshers	49	49	16
Hammermen	68	62	8
Goldsmiths	36	53	6
Maltmen	48	54	13
Masons	62	63	9
Skinners	55	53	11
Surgeon/apothecary	28	31	32
Tailors	54	55	10
Weavers	87	74	-
Wrights	54	51	4

Source:- Register of Testaments.

The poorest were weavers - no weaver left more than £2,500 while 87% left less than £500. Cordiners were marginally better-off and hammermen slightly wealthier than both. At the opposite extreme, roughly one-third of all surgeon/apothecaries and 'book trade' members registered wills valued at over £2,500, 9% of the former and 5% of the latter over £10,000. Splitting these two groups into their component parts reveals that apothecaries were wealthier than surgeons and that booksellers and printers were wealthier than bookbinders and stationers, but the samples involved are too small to be significant. There were some wealthy fleshers, masons, maltmen and skinners, although most members of these crafts were financially 'average', but surprisingly no goldsmith left more than £5,000. It would seem from the figures that while there were fewer than average 'poor' goldsmiths, the majority were clustered in the middle category, those worth up to £1,000; however, the number of testaments registered is

again very small and could therefore be unrepresentative. It is also possible that the very richest burgesses had their testaments recorded somewhere other than Edinburgh but this is felt to be unlikely in the vast majority of cases. Bonnetmakers, tailors, wrights and baxters deviated very little from the norm, although there were few wealthy wrights, and the only wealthy bonnetmakers were litsters.

It is not possible to rank the trade incorporations of Edinburgh from a study of individual testaments but certain generalisations can be made from the figures they supply. An ambitious youth would have done well to avoid a career as a weaver, cordiner or hammerman (although a few of the latter aspired to moderate wealth). If he sought a measure of security without spectacular success, then the crafts of baxter, skinner, tailor, flesher, mason or maltman might have suited him - there were a handful of rich masters in these trades, and a minority of poor ones but the average craft member fared moderately well. But if he aspired to a craft fortune, he should have set his sights on a career as an apothecary or surgeon, perhaps a goldsmith, or if he cared less for status, a litster, printer or bookseller. Individual members of all these crafts left fortunes as great as many overseas merchants:- Robert Bryson, a bookseller, died in 1645, leaving an estate of £22,000; William Pringle, a litster who died in 1611, left over £15,000; Alexander Kincaid, a doctor of medicine, left £20,632 in his will in 1649; and when Patrick Hepburn's wife died in 1644, the assets of his apothecary's business totalled £10,453. These were, however, unusually large sums of money, even for members of the wealthier crafts.

If these and other examples of personal estates are a true indication of the prosperity of crafts, it is interesting to note that

wealth and status did not always go hand-in-hand. Both wrights and hammermen were regularly elected as craft councillors, the ultimate measure of status in the burgh, yet their members seemed to be amongst the poorest groups, with few rich masters. Masons and tailors had similar patterns of wealth but masons only made irregular appearances in the council chambers while tailors were almost permanent craft representatives. As for litsters and maltmen, their money was unable to buy them places of influence - they were totally disregarded.

The same 749 craft testaments were also arranged in such a way as to show fluctuations in wealth at different periods of the century, and they are worth considering as an indication of the prosperity of Edinburgh. At the beginning of the century, they seem to reflect figures for the 'average' craftsman, with over half of the testaments in the 1600s worth less than £500, and fewer than 10% worth more than £2,500. By the 1640s, however, there are more than double the number of craftsmen leaving estates valued at over £2,500 and fewer in the poorest categories, but the testaments recorded in the 1670s show a complete reversal of this trend. Nearly 70% of craftsmen died with assets of less than £500, over 40% left under £100 and the number of wealthier men had halved.

TABLE 3.8 CRAFT WEALTH AS INDICATED BY TESTAMENTS (percentages)

	1600s	1610s	1640s	1670s	1700s
Negative	6	2	3	20	5
£0-100	13	12	10	22	14
£101-500	39	34	36	29	38
£501-1000	17	18	20	9	19
£1001-2500	17	21	15	12	14
£2501-5000	5	2	12	4	-
£5001-10000	1	7	2	3	10
Over £10000	1	2	1	-	-
Nos. in sample	157	163	310	98	21

Source:- Register of Testaments.

A very small sample for a few years in the 1700s suggests that the situation had improved in the intervening period to roughly the same level as the first decade of the seventeenth century.

There seems to be only one interpretation of these figures - that craftsmen were becoming rather more prosperous in the years up to the 1640s but that in the next thirty years they suffered a considerable decline in their fortunes which left them, by the end of the century, little better-off than they had been one hundred years before. This suggests that the Civil War and Cromwellian period had a devastating effect on the local economy and that it recovered only slowly, if at all, in the following twenty years.

One reason could be advanced for the particularly buoyant figures in the 1640s. As a result of the two epidemics of plague, a higher percentage of people than normal must have died in their prime. Sudden death would probably have left their businesses flourishing to a greater extent than if they had lived through a process of gradual ageing and decline. The slight difference in prosperity between the two decades of the 1610s and 1640s might have been accounted for in this way.

The traditional view of the Cromwellian period was that it represented a decade of depression and financial stringency in Scotland, and this picture was reinforced by the findings of Thomas Tucker in his report on the customs and excise of the country, which showed that the trade of the majority of ports was in decline.[1]

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1. T. Keith, 'The Economic Condition of Scotland under the Commonwealth and Protectorate', S.H.R. 5, 1907-8 and T. Tucker, "Report upon the Settlement of the Revenues of Customs and Excise in Scotland, A.D.1656" in Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society, (Edinburgh 1881).

More recent studies have suggested on the one hand that some burghs, notably Glasgow, recovered more quickly than was thought, but on the other hand, have drawn attention to the enormous financial strains placed on Scotland at this time, and particularly on the capital city, a point which was made originally by the editor of the Council records.[1] The evidence of the craft testaments appears to confirm the worst fears about the economic plight of Edinburgh in the late 1640s and 1650s. Furthermore, it suggests that those who began their careers during this period were unable to improve their lot in the years after the Restoration and this casts some doubt on any notion of recovery in the 1660s.

In view of the importance of these findings to an economic history of the city, it was decided to look at the testaments in other ways. Two methods of assessing craft wealth for the sample decades involved the breaking up of each testament into three parts to see exactly how a person's wealth was being held, whether in physical goods or in debts owed to him (or by him). The method of entering a testament in the registers was firstly to place a valuation on the inventory, then to add to it the amount owed to the deceased and finally to subtract from this total the debts owed by the deceased. In a period of relative prosperity, one might expect to find an increase in the value of a man's movable goods together with a decrease in the debts he owed; in a period of depression one might expect the opposite to occur, with a decrease in his movable goods and

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1. T. Devine, 'The Cromwellian Union and the Scottish Burghs: the Case of Aberdeen and Glasgow 1652-60' in J. Butt and J. Ward (eds.), Scottish Themes (Edinburgh 1976), p.12 and E.R.B.E. 1655-65, (Edinburgh 1940), p.ix.

an increase in his debts. In order to test this for the years in question, each testament was allocated to one of three categories below, the first (column 1) containing those in which the sum of the inventory was the largest part of the total estate, the second (column 2) comprising those in which the 'debts owing' to the deceased were the largest figure, and the third (column 3) in which the sum of the 'debts owed' by the deceased was the greatest. Although this is a very crude method of assessing changes in asset-holding, the complex structure of a man's estate, in which the final figure often bore little relation to the value of goods and amounts of money handled, makes it difficult to find a satisfactory alternative. Table 3.9 sets out the findings.

TABLE 3.9 METHOD OF WEALTH-HOLDING, EDINBURGH CRAFT TESTAMENTS (%)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
1601-10	38	52	10
1611-20	29	62	9
1640-49	49	47	4
1670-79	20	48	32

Source:- Register of Testaments.

The figures in column 2 will be disregarded in the meantime as they are open to a number of different interpretations and might only reflect changes in the popularity or legality of money lending or credit arrangements during the century. For the 1640s, very few men were dying with significant amounts of debt while nearly half held the greatest part of their assets in stock or possessions; for the 1670s, levels of tangible wealth had fallen and debts risen, suggesting a period of economic difficulty.

Another method of calculating changes in the pattern of asset-holding takes account of the total value of goods/money being handled at the time of death - it could be argued that the sums of money and

credit in which a person dealt were a better indication of his economic standing at a point in time than the final total of his estate. If the amount of his possessions or inventory was less than the total figure for the estate, the person had a credit balance, if it was more, he had a debit balance. In a period of economic prosperity, one might expect to find more estates in credit, in a period of depression, there might be more in debit. When this was tested for the four decades under review, it was found that the number of estates in which possessions or stock would have to be sold to pay debts decreased from 27% to 13% from the 1600s to the 1640s but that it jumped to 44% in the 1670s, suggesting a deterioration in the fortunes of large numbers of craftsmen in the middle years of the century. It remains to be seen whether merchant testaments indicated similar fluctuations in wealth.

The merchant burgesses of the city are much less easy to define than the craftsmen, who can at least be divided into occupational groups. They formed the smaller and wealthier part of the burgess community, and their livelihood depended primarily on trading commodities; but attempts to divide them into retailers/wholesalers or into domestic/overseas traders throughout the century have foundered on lack of sufficient information. A merchant was simply designated 'merchant' in the Burgess Roll - there was nothing to distinguish poor from rich, peddler from shopkeeper, the middling sort from the merchant prince. In any case, artificial categories are frequently irrelevant as changes in mens' fortunes tended to shift them from slot to slot, while others managed to combine varied trading interests. If a merchant burgess failed to become a member of the guild, it is likely that he traded within Scotland, as overseas trade was supposed

to be reserved for guild members; but ordinary burgesses might have engaged in foreign trade in a small way without being detected. It will also be remembered from Chapter 1 that 90% of merchants joined the guild in the second half of the century and it is inconceivable that all of these, some 1,300, intended to trade abroad on a regular basis.

If a proper series of customs records had existed for the port of Leith, it might have been possible to check the names of traders against the Burgess Roll at various times, and thus to establish a list of overseas merchants. However, the customs books are few and fragmented, covering only a handful of years in the 1620s and the late 1660s/early 1670s. A survey of merchants and skippers for the customs year 1621-2 indicates a figure of approximately 200 traders at this time but this includes merchants who entered only one consignment of goods and were probably occasional overseas dealers, skippers who only sometimes owned cargoes, and about thirty merchants from other burghs who were not burgesses of Edinburgh. While this would nevertheless suggest that between one-quarter and one-third of all merchant burgesses of the city traded abroad, proportions which are similar to those of the overseas trading communities of Aberdeen and Glasgow, they are based on figures for a single year which was probably atypical because of the incidence of famine.[1]

The Register of Testaments offers the best chance of defining the merchant community, although it too has its drawbacks. While it should be possible to identify the ordinary trader and the overseas

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1. Edinburgh figures derived from S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series, E71/29/7; Glasgow figures from Smout, 'Merchant Community' p.63; Aberdeen figures from MacNiven, op.cit., p.127.

merchant from the value of their estates, factors such as old age and ill-health or misfortunes such as shipwreck can distort the patterns of wealth. It is probably even less meaningful to talk of an 'average' merchant than an 'average' craftsman; nevertheless, the merchant testaments which are available for the four selected decades, 901 in all, have been set out below to correspond with those for craftsmen in Table 3.5. The craftsmen figures have been repeated for comparison.

The impossibility of referring to an 'average' merchant is immediately obvious. While the majority of craft estates were bunched between £100 and £2,500 in value, merchant estates are more evenly spread over the entire range of wealth. At first glance, one might expect that the 40% of estates valued at less than £1,000 pertained largely to the ordinary trader, the dealer in haberdashery, pots and pans and general household wares, that the middling sort of merchant dabbling in a variety of domestic and occasional overseas trade left between £1,000 and £5,000 in his will, and that the top 25%, those with estates valued at over £5,000, consisted of the regular overseas traders and wholesalers of the merchant community.

TABLE 3.10 WEALTH OF EDINBURGH MERCHANTS FROM THEIR TESTAMENTS
(Percentages in brackets)

	Merchants		Crafts	
Negative	73	(8)	44	(6)
£0-100	43	(5)	96	(13)
£100-500	156	(17)	267	(36)
£501-1000	115	(13)	131	(17)
£1000-2500	173	(19)	124	(17)
£2501-5000	129	(14)	52	(7)
£5001-10000	92	(10)	26	(3)
Over £10000	120	(13)	9	(1)
	901		749	

Source:- Commissary Court of Edinburgh, Register of Testaments.

The only way to verify these statements is by example and the following pages, illustrating the careers of a variety of Edinburgh merchants will highlight the difficulties encountered in apportioning individuals to general categories.

Robert Keith was, on paper, a middling sort of trader. He became a burgess in 1606 by right of his father-in-law, a barber, although he only qualified as a guild member in 1615. (As his first wife died in 1614 and he re-married the following year, it appears that he obtained his guild membership through his second wife.) His assets in 1614, recorded in his first wife's testament, totalled £1,465; he was owed £2,000 for merchandise, his stock and possessions came to over £3,000 but his debts were nearly £4,000.[1] He entered fifteen separate consignments of goods at the port of Leith in the customs year 1621-2, mostly from the Netherlands, and he obviously dealt in general merchandise with a particular emphasis on dyes, spices and foodstuffs. A fairly typical entry aboard the Lamb of Leith from Campvere in September 1622 consisted of six barrels of orchard litt (a red or violet dye), 600 lb. brisell (a red dye), 130 lbs. almonds, 100 lb. brimstone (the drug sulphur), 60 lb. sugar candy, 600 lb. alum, 100 lb. aniseed, 800 lb. copperas, 100 lb. galls (for colouring or dying), and 100 lb. tow. The following year he shipped eight further consignments of similar goods; in 1624-5 he exported 38 stones of 'auld bras' 65 hides and 1,740 woolskins.[2] But when his second wife died in 1638, he had virtually no stock, owed £1,000 to a minister of Edinburgh and 1,000 marks to an advocate, and his overall debts

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1. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/48.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series, E71/29/7 and E71/30/30.

amounted to £789.[1] By this time, he had been a burgess for 32 years; he was, in all likelihood, a man in his mid-fifties and his business had probably declined as a result of his age or incapacity. He had been a fairly prolific trader over a number of years but had been unable to build on or even to retain his prosperity into old age.

Gilbert Williamson was a contemporary of Keith, becoming a burgess and guild member in 1610 and dying in 1639. He had three wives, one of whom outlived him; between them, they registered four testaments and as a result, we have an excellent example of the fluctuating fortunes of a merchant career. We first come upon Williamson in 1616 when his first wife died, and at this time he was a dealer in cloth. In his inventory were eight consignments of cloth in venture abroad:- "to Danskin with Thomas Carnegie 12 pieces English cloth, each piece containing 12 ells", "to Konigsberg with Thomas Strachan 12 ells mixt cullorit cloth, and also with him 36 ells of black frieze and 12 ells of brown kersey".[2] He had also sent the sum of £200 abroad "with Patrick Twedy, uncle to the defunctis spouse". The inventory totalled £2,557, but the debts owed to the business amounted to £5,253. Many were listed as 'according to his ticket' or 'be his obligation' and it is not possible to say whether some of these were for goods purchased from Williamson or were acknowledgements of money borrowed from him. The size of both the individual and total debts suggests that money lending was one of his sidelines. The geographical extent of his debts was also considerable although it appeared to centre on the Borders - three people from

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1. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/58.
2. Ibid., CC8/8/49.

Peebles owed him money, two from Dumfries and one each from Melrose, Jedburgh and Lochmaben, as well as others in Aberdeen and Dundee. It is possible that he had relatives in Dumfries; a certain William Williamson of that burgh owed him £45 and the same person was found trading with, and borrowing money from, a number of Edinburgh merchants in the early seventeenth century. Recent work on Dumfries indicates that Edinburgh burgesses frequently acted as middlemen in the overseas trade of many Dumfries merchants, and extended family networks between rural areas and the capital city have already been noted.[1]

Gilbert Williamson not only lent money; he also borrowed it. In 1616, he owed over £4,000 to a number of people, the largest sum, £3,316, to his uncle, Patrick Tweedie, mentioned above. The balance of his estate at this time was £3,738. When his second wife died in 1625, his debt to Tweedie had risen to £4,000, and although he had goods in venture to Danzig and Bordeaux, his estate was valued at only £999.[2] He still traded largely in cloth, but like many other merchants, could be found importing quantities of grain in the famine years of 1622-23. His name even appears in the overland customs books in 1625, when he entered seven packs of Yorkshire cloth at the customs post of Carlisle, valued at £63.[3]

When he died in 1639, his business affairs had improved considerably. Among his possessions was his library of Dutch, French and Scots books worth £40; he was owed money by burgesses of Aberdeen

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1. W.K. Coutts, 'Social and Economic History of the Commissariot of Dumfries from 1600-1665' as disclosed by the Register of Testaments, (M.Litt., Edinburgh 1982), pp.93-4.
2. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/53.
3. S.R.O., Edinburgh Customs Books, E71/30/30.

Montrose and Peebles; his debts were negligible and the balance of his estate was £6,156.[1] Here, then, was a man who dabbled in various trading ventures, who specialised largely in cloth, whose business affairs showed fluctuating fortunes, but who died, probably in later middle-age, in reasonable comfort. (It is interesting to note, however, that his widow fared less well. When she died a year after him, she owed over £5,000 and was in overall debt to the tune of £2,393.[2] One wonders whether she tried to carry on the family business and got into difficulties or whether she became liable for debts of her husband's, previously omitted from his testament.)

It was possible to make large fortunes out of cloth dealing. When Alexander Telfer's wife died in 1631, the inventory of goods, amounting to almost £10,000, consisted mostly of cloth, and the whole estate was worth £23,000.[3] James Rae, another specialist in cloth, held goods valued at £22,000 in his wife's testament of 1628, and John Rynd held stocks of cloth, mostly silk and fine taffetas, worth over £60,000 in 1635.[4] It has to be assumed that these men were large wholesalers, but moderate fortunes could also be made from the cloth trade. William Paterson's stock consisted entirely of cloth in 1614; there was silk, grograine silk and fustian, satin, Holland cloth and camrays, and "200 ells of Spanish taffeta at £7 the ell" and "90 ells of velvet at 20 merks the ell", the last two items alone totalling £2,600.[5] He had sheepskins in the hands of a factor in Dieppe and plaiding with a factor in Flanders, and gold and silver worth £2,280,

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1. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/59.
2. Ibid., CC8/8/59.
3. Ibid., CC8/8/55.
4. Ibid., CC8/8/54 and CC8/8/57.
5. Ibid., CC8/8/48.

the whole inventory amounting to £11,409 plus about £1,000 worth of debts owed to him. When he died in 1635, his stocks had dwindled considerably but he was still comfortably off, with an estate valued at nearly £8,000.[1]

The main difference between William Paterson and the cloth merchants mentioned previously was that his business was founded solely on trade, while they had obviously branched into money-lending. James Rae, in addition to his stock of £22,000 was owed more than £50,000 in debts for merchandise and in loans, many of them in Glasgow; John Rynd was owed a staggering £173,550; and George Suittie, whose trade was almost entirely in cloth, was owed £49,500 in small debts, bonds, annual rents and official loans - to 'the burghs of the realm' £3,400 and to the town council of Edinburgh £6,323.[2] On paper, however, Rynd was not a wealthy man. The balance of his estate was only £2,749 as he himself had debts of over £241,000. He owed almost all the wealthiest merchants in Edinburgh substantial amounts; to William Dick £5,900, to George Suittie £3,600, to David Jonkin 'of borrowed money' £8,900, to Hew Hamilton for merchandise £8,700. His network of debt and credit cannot be equalled among the testaments studied. Other moneylenders, however, managed to make substantial profits. When James Barnes died in 1647, the inventory of his goods totalled £11,461, including shares in four vessels but he also lent money on a vast scale, to the Earl of Seaforth and the estates of Scotland (£16,000), as well as to landowners and burgesses in places as far apart as Aberdeen, Dumfries, Anstruther, Caithness and

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1. Ibid., CC8/8/57.
2. Ibid., CC8/8/54.

Galloway. He must have been a generous man as well as a rich one; he left legacies to the College of Edinburgh, money for repairs to the Bridge of Leith and 2,000 merks to a certain William Chancellor "to help make up his sealoss".[1] Interestingly, he only once sat on the town council, in 1642-3, although the political complexities of the Covenanting period probably denied council membership to a number of merchants.

An analysis of the council lists and testaments, however, gives the impression that more than a few of Edinburgh's richest merchants did not involve themselves in council business, and that some who did were by no means wealthy. Gilbert Williamson, for example, was a councillor on five occasions, and on two of these he was a bailie, whereas Alexander Telfer was never a councillor, in spite of his wealth. David Jonkin, a prominent trader and one-time manager of St. Paul's Work (the town's weaving manufactory), left £36,000 when he died in 1641 but was only once a councillor, while Peter Somervell, six times on the council and twice burgh treasurer,left an estate of less than £1,000, and Gilbert Acheson, eight times on the council and three years a bailie, was never worth more than £2,500 on paper.[2] The theme of council membership and wealth will be taken up in greater detail in the following chapter.

The career of Andrew Purves provides another example of fluctuating fortunes. Purves became a burgess and guild brother in 1603, the son-in-law of an advocate, and became a widower for the first time in 1609, the father of four young children. His wife's

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1. Ibid., CC8/8/62.
2. Ibid., CC8/8/60, CC8/8/58 and CC8/8/57.

inventory, dated 1610, listed 12 tuns of Spanish and 6 tuns of French wine and three-part shares in the Greyhound, the Blessing and the Gift of God of Leith, together with £200 worth of household and personal goods; the whole estate amounted to £4,181.[1] He continued to trade abroad on a considerable scale, exporting wax and 1,000 knappald to Cadiz in 1611 and importing numerous consignments of grain during the 1622-23 famine. On these occasions, he normally operated in partnership with some of the largest and wealthiest merchants of the day, who had become heavily involved in the grain trade - William Dick, Andrew Ainslie, William Wilkie and John Sinclair.[2] His second wife died in 1632 and their joint testament indicates changes in Purves' career. He still traded in wine and had shares in the Robert and the Blessing but he also owned 2 oxen, 2 horses and 2 cows valued at £150 and 5 bolls of oats, 5 bolls of peas and 30 bolls of bear "in the barn and barnyard of Lamertonmills(?)"[3] This is one of the few merchant testaments studied which revealed a connection with land but there is no evidence to prove that Purves had actually purchased an estate. On paper, he was significantly less wealthy than in 1610 - he owed 4,000 merks to John Sinclair and a further 300 merks to a skipper in Leith, and the balance of his assets was only £580.

The absence of information about property and landholding is one of the greatest drawbacks in the use of testaments as indicators of wealth. There are occasional references to the value of crops "sown upon the ground" - Alexander Noble owned corn in 1624 and David Wilson, a skipper in South Queensferry had £400 worth of oats still on

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1. Ibid., CC8/8/46.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series, E71/29/6 and E71/29/7.
3. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/55.

the land in 1626 - and figures of rents owed suggest property ownership - James Murray was owed £315 by the tenants of Deuchar in 1649 - but the capital value of land or property is excluded from the testaments.[1] While references to merchant landowners can be found in a number of local histories, no new information has been gleaned from any primary sources studied.

A few further examples of merchant testaments will suffice. There were specialists other than dealers in cloth; Thomas Cramond's estate of over £10,000 in 1623 consisted almost entirely of stocks of iron while James McMoran owned 58,000 stones of lead ore, including 11,000 stones in venture to Flanders and 10,000 stones "upon the lead hill". James Ainslie, the father of Andrew Ainslie, the wealthiest merchant found in the sample, left an estate valued at only £3,447, largely because he bequeathed 10,000 merks (£6,667) to his son.[2] Thomas Moodie had debts of £56,000 in 1650, and an overall deficit of £35,000, although he had been the burgh treasurer in 1642-3 and left money which was ultimately used for the building of the Canongate church. His main debt was to his son-in-law Alexander Maxwell, £20,000 "conforme to his contract matrimoniall", although he also owed 1,000 merks to Thomas Moodie, presumably a relative, the present provost of Dundee, and £600 to a number of masons suggestng that he had some interest in property.[3] Andrew Hutchinson, merchant burgess of Edinburgh 'in the kingdom of Pole' left nearly £2,000; Robert Acheson, brother of Gilbert, and six times a council member, left little more.

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1. Ibid., CC8/8/52, CC8/8/53 and CC8/8/64.
2. Ibid., CC8/8/52.
3. Ibid,, CC8/8/65.

It should now be obvious that numerous merchant testaments bear little relation to the generalisations offered earlier. A merchant's fortunes frequently depended on the arrival of a ship, the sale of goods in venture abroad, the payment of debts. If he or his wife died at an unfortunate moment in his career, the recorded value of his estate might suggest an entirely different level of wealth from that which he normally aspired to. There are a number of estates valued at less than £1,000 which pertained to merchant councillors and overseas traders while there are occasional examples of men who dealt largely in domestic goods leaving sums in excess of £5,000. It also appears that many regular overseas traders left estates of between £1,000 and £5,000 - trading abroad was not synonymous with the wealthy elite. The examples cited above illustrate the possibilities within any level of wealth; nevertheless, it would probably be true to say that few simple merchant burgesses and inland traders were worth much more than £1,000, and that most of the merchant elite owned over £5,000 at some point in their career, although some might have been temporarily embarassed by debts or misfortune while others might have become the victims of ill health or old age. The overseas trader, however, did not necessarily amass a fortune; many who dealt in foreign goods were fairly ordinary men who did not fit into the classic picture of the merchant prince. Recent evidence has suggested that as many as 40% of Edinburgh merchants in the period 1570-1603 were involved in trade outwith the boundaries of Scotland at some time in their careers and that the remainder were local merchants[1], the majority of whom left

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1. M.H. Sanderson, 'The Edinburgh Merchants in Society, 1570-1603: the Evidence of their Testaments' in J.B. Cowan and D.Shaw, The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland (Edinburgh 1983), p.194.

under £1,000. It is undoubtedly possible, even likely, that Edinburgh with its own large and growing population and its extensive hinterland could support a higher proportion of overseas traders than the smaller burghs of Glasgow and Aberdeen, in which about 25% of all merchants were 'sea adventurers'.[1] Returning to Table 3.10, this suggests that most of those who left estates valued between £2,500 and £5,000 regularly traded abroad together with a further group from the category of estates valued at £1,000-£2,500, in addition to the merchants who left over £5,000.

Merchant testaments have also been arranged to show changing patterns of wealth at different times during the century and appear to confirm the earlier results for craftsmen testaments in Table 3.8.

TABLE 3.11 MERCHANT WEALTH AS INDICATED BY TESTAMENTS (%).

	1600s	1610s	1640s	1670s	1700s
Negative	2	2	3	31	17
£0-100	3	4	3	11	13
£101-500	15	15	18	22	13
£501-1000	12	13	15	9	13
£1001-2500	28	22	15	14	30
£2501-5000	18	16	16	6	4
£5001-10000	10	13	12	6	-
over £10000	12	15	19	1	7
Nos. in sample	168	207	343	160	23

Source:- Commissary Court, Register of Testaments.

The rich were certainly becoming richer up to the 1640s with nearly half of all testaments registered falling within the top three categories of wealth at that time. The change which took place in the next thirty years was dramatic, with almost two-thirds of testaments valued at less than £500 and only 7% at over £5,000, and there did not

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1. Smout, 'Merchant Community', p.63.

appear to be a significant recovery in the years to 1700. However, because the sample for the decade of the 1700s is too small to be reliable and there is a marked deterioration in the standards of recording testaments in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, too much emphasis should not be placed on the final column of figures.

Merchant wealth has also been assessed in two other ways to correspond with data for craftsmen. Table 3.12 records the divisions within the testaments and suggests a similar pattern to that given in Table 3.9.

TABLE 3.12 METHOD OF WEALTH-HOLDING, EDINBURGH MERCHANT TESTAMENTS(%)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
1601-10	45	49	5
1611-20	33	60	6
1640-49	45	49	6
1670-79	22	37	41

Source:- Register of Testaments.

Finally, when merchant estates were viewed in terms of debit or credit balance, it was found that stock or possessions would only have had to be sold in 11-13% of cases to pay debts over the period 1600-49 but that during the 1670s, this figure jumped to 57% of the total. Since both merchant and craft testaments follow a similar pattern, it would suggest a marked deterioration in the economic activities and condition of the burgesses of Edinburgh in the period after 1650.

CHAPTER 4 PROPERTY OWNERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chapter 3 illustrated some of the possibilities of using testaments to obtain a picture of the burgess community and the individuals within it; it also highlighted some of the drawbacks. The present chapter, while offering futher evidence of burgess activities from the same source, will also look at other documents, notably tax rolls, which might be used in conjunction with the wills to extend our knowledge of the seventeenth-century burgess. Burgh tax rolls, when available, provide an immediate indication of a man's financial position in relation to other taxpayers but unless they form a series, they suffer from the same disadvantage as a single testament - that they only give an indication of wealth at a fixed point in time. There is also the question of their reliability; an accurate assessment of an individual's wealth depended partly on the assessor, especially if a man was responsible for his own declaration, and considering the volatility of merchant fortunes, understatement or over-valuation of assets might have been a common occurence. However, in the close-knit community of the pre-industrial town, it is unlikely that flagrant attempts to defraud would pass unnoticed.

There are a number of burgh tax rolls for Edinburgh in the period 1631-42 but the most interesting and informative is undoubtedly the Extent Roll for Annuity Tax of 1635 which is not a simple tax assessment but contains a list of property owners and tenants living within the burgh at that time.[1] It will be remembered from Chapter 1 that one of the obligations of a burgess was to live within the city walls

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1. This section is based on material from E.C.A., Extent Roll for Annuity Tax 1635 and C.B.B. Watson, 'A List of Property Owners in Edinburgh, 1635', B.O.E.C. 13, 1924.

and while some were prosecuted by the council for their failure to do so, the vast majority owned or rented houses in Edinburgh. The tax was instituted in order to pay the stipends of the town ministers in a more satisfactory and regular way, and was levied at the rate of four and one-third per cent on the annual valued rental of each property. The pre-amble to the Privy Council act inaugurating the new tax states:-

> "there is nothing more consonant to equitie and reason then that all suche persons that daylie injoyes in plentie that blessing of the Word of God and heares the same preached and does participat in the benefite of the Churche sould contribute to the maintenance of the ministrie in these places where they receave the saids benefites."[1]

Be that as it may, the tax was unpopular since it was levied, irrespective of wealth, on landlords and tenants alike, the only exceptions being the lawyers who sought and obtained exemption in 1637. Although enforceable by the town bailies, the tax proved difficult to collect and seldom realised the sums of money anticipated; it nevertheless remained in force until the nineteenth century.

Assessors, ten merchants and six craftsmen, were first appointed in 1635 to visit every house within the burgh and to estimate the annual rent of each property, the task to be repeated at least every two years to include new properties and update values. The manuscript in the Edinburgh City Archive therefore lists the names of all landlords and tenants and because the Extent Roll was drawn up systematically, street by street, within twelve administrative districts, it has been possible to work out the approximate location of each

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1. R.P.C.S., Second series, Vol. V, 1633-35, pp.234-5.

building. However, no reference has been found to indicate the criteria used in assessing the rents and it has to be assumed that properties were valued largely on the basis of size with perhaps an element relating to location and general desirability. While attention has been drawn to the virtually classless structure of the Edinburgh tenement[1], there were popular and fashionable locations within the town, then as now. In addition, there is no means of knowing whether the assessed rental arrived at by the extentor was in fact the same as the amount of money changing hands between tenant and landlord, but considerable discrepancy between the two seems unlikely. Finally, many names in the list give no indication of the owner's status or occupation. The following information is therefore based only on those who are mentioned as 'merchant' or 'craftsman' and those whose names were recognised as practising burgesses. With these reservations in mind, the Annuity Tax can be used both to map out the wealthier and poorer areas of the city and to indicate another aspect of burgess wealth.

There is such an abundance of detail in the manuscript of the Annuity Tax that attention has had to be concentrated on landlords rather than tenants and merchants rather than craftsmen. Approximately 130 craft landlords were noted and over 160 merchant landlords. Tailors, skinners, baxters, vintners/maltmen, hammermen, surgeon/apothecaries, and goldsmiths were mentioned most frequently as craftsmen property owners and this is a relatively accurate reflection of craft wealth as suggested in Chapter 3. A survey of those premises with rental values of £100 and over, approximately 500 or 13% of the

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.346.

total stock, showed that only twenty-seven craftsmen owned property of the highest value, nineteen if the eight vintners are removed from the list. (Vintners were frequently wealthy men and it is difficult to know whether they should be considered as 'merchants' or not. It depends on whether they were wholesalers actively importing alcoholic beverages from abroad or merely purchased their stock from other merchants and were primarily innkeepers or brewers.) The nineteen consisted of seven tailors, six surgeon/apothecaries, two litsters, two maltmen, one baxter and one goldsmith and more than half of them owned property valued at the minimum of £100.

A number of prominent merchants were found amongst the tenant group, including John Rynd, noted previously for his money-lending, David Aikenhead, provost of the burgh nine times during the 1620s and 1630s, and numerous councillors and known overseas traders. There were also merchant landlords who rented additional premises. In some cases, the rented property was highly valued and probably comprised their own dwelling house - Patrick Wood was the tenant of a house valued at £333, Gilbert Acheson rented a property of £140 from Alexander Telfer, one of the cloth wholesalers - but for the most part the rented premises were of lower value than their own and possibly consisted of additional storage, shop or booth facilities, perhaps a 'granny flat' or 'bachelor pad' for a relative. William Dick lived in the largest merchant's house in Edinburgh with an assessment of £500, but rented at £67 from Robert Glenn, another merchant burgess; James Rae, a cloth merchant, lived in the second most expensive house (£400 assessed rental) but rented other premises at £160 from John Sinclair, who in turn occupied a property at £160 and rented at £120 from John Power. There are also instances of property owners who did not sully

themselves with renting to others. Andrew Ainslie had only one property valued at £240 which he occupied and so had James Rocheid, a prominent councillor and later landowner who lived in a house valued at £267. The majority of merchants listed, however, occupied their own house and rented additional premises to others.

One feature indicated by the Extent Roll is the inter-related nature of renting which existed between the most well-known merchants, only paralleled by their network of credit and debt, touched upon earlier, and their inter-connected ties of marriage and kinship, still to be examined. Examples of renting have already been given above but a few others will further illustrate the point. Thomas Moodie, noted in Chapter 3 for the level of his debts, owned two properties; he occupied part of one, at an assessed rental of £120, and let out the remainder to six tenants at a total of £317 rent, the largest house at £100 to an advocate. He also rented at £120 from Gilbert Acheson and at £133 from John Hilston, burgh treasurer in 1648-9 and an overseas trader in the 1620s customs books. William Dick, the wealthiest merchant of his time, rented premises to James Barnes, one of the few burgesses known to have left over £60,000 in his will. Andrew Purves occupied property worth £200 and rented a dwelling within the same building to Alexander Monteith, a frequent trading partner of his in the 1620s, while Alexander Speir, a regular member of the council from 1620 to 1625 owned seven properties in different parts of the city and let one of them to George Suittie, a wealthy and well-known figure in the 1620s and 1630s.

Property ownership could be viewed as a useful source of income if profits from trade had declined. Robert Keith, whose career was mapped out earlier, was able to draw £430 in rent from sixteen tenants

in 1635; Thomas Lindsay, a 'merchant' who gained his burgess and guild membership in 1606 as an apprentice tailor, drew one of the highest incomes from rent, having fourteen tenants at a total rent of £857 including two substantial merchants and Lady Cockburnspath. As he was probably a man of around 55 at this time, he might have derived a considerable part of his income from passive rent-collecting rather than active trade. The same could be said for Joseph Marjoribanks, a very eminent merchant, councillor and bailie in the 1610s and 1620s and founder of both a red herring manufactory at Dunbar and a prominent local family - his son Andrew became an advocate while another son, John, was a merchant councillor and bailie in the 1640s and 1650s. Joseph died in 1636 with an estate of only £681 and no stock, and he was assessed for taxation at only £30 in 1634; his tenants in 1635, however, were Gilbert Neilson, an advocate, at £200 and the Earl of Lothian at £267. Peter Somervell, another elderly ex-councillor, bailie and town treasurer in the period 1617-1625, died in 1638 with an estate of only £987 but drew rents of £779 from his seven properties in 1635.

It is also interesting to note that many of the wealthiest landlords were neither prosperous according to their wills and tax assessments nor reputable enough to become council members. There were twenty-three landlords who owned properties to let at a total of £500 assessed rental and above or 15% of the whole. Of these, thirteen had never been on the council at all, three had only once been councillors, five would register wills valued at under £2,000 and for almost half of their number, no information was available. It would be unfair to imply that there was anything seedy about these men - all were members of the guild - but their economic activities must

have been concentrated in areas which are undocumented. In complete contrast, fourteeen out of the sixteen merchants who owned and occupied property valued at £200 and over (the most valuable 15% of individual burgh properties) were regular councillors and probably constituted part of the elite burgess group in the 1630s. They included several merchants whose names are already familiar - Andrew Ainslie, James Rae, Andrew Purves and the ubiquitous William Dick. Table 4.1 sets out the levels of income, based on property assessments, which might have accrued to the merchant property owners of the burgh in a year; Table 4.2 shows their assessed rental as owner-occupiers. There were 162 owners in total (listed in Appendix 2) - twelve did not rent properties to others while forty-seven did not occupy the premises they owned. The figures of property rentals ranged from £733 for a single building rented to James Wallace, a vintner, on the south side of the High Street to £116 shared amongst nineteen tenants of a property at the foot of Candlemaker Row.

TABLES 4.1 and 4.2 RENTAL VALUES OF MERCHANT PROPERTY, 1635.
(percentages in brackets)

Table 4.1 Tenanted property

£0-150	62	(41)
£151-300	36	(24)
£301-450	24	(16)
£451-600	12	(8)
£601-750	9	(6)
Over £750	7	(5)
	150	

Table 4.2 Owner-occupied property

£0-99	49	(43)
£100-199	50	(43)
£200-299	13	(11)
Over £300	3	(3)
	115	

Source:- E.C.A., Extent Roll for Annuity Tax, 1635.

The ordinary burgh tax assessments, based on ownership of property or goods above a certain figure, provide another means of ranking the members of the Edinburgh burgess community and can most

usefully be compared with other indicators of wealth.[1] Extent rolls for 1634 and 1642 were sampled to show the declared affluence of some of the better-known merchants of the burgh, men already encountered through their trading activities, property ownership or testaments. Some assessments reinforced impressions gained from other sources - William Dick with a tax assessment of £1,200 in 1634 was three times richer than the next man, William Gray, at £433, although the value placed on his assets had fallen to £700 by 1642; Thomas Moodie was extented for £367 and £333 respectively and James Rae for £230 in 1634, while Gilbert Williamson's assessment was £67 in the same year, and Andrew Purves and Gilbert Acheson both paid at £45. There were assessments, however, which contrasted sharply with information from other sources - Andrew Ainslie was taxed at only £40 and £67 although he left £110,655 in his will, John Rynd was assessed at £67 in 1634 and George Suittie at £80 (although he had an estate valued at over £20,000 six years previously).

It should now be apparent that much of the evidence concerning merchant wealth is conflicting and difficult to interpret. Every source has its drawbacks, none has an overwhelming advantage over others. One explanation of seemingly irreconcilable information lies in the precarious nature of a merchant's business. All but the most affluent must have had their years of difficulty, their trading losses, their bad debts. During the better years, they probably improved their standards of living, acquired more (or more expensive) premises, more items of luxury or domestic comfort, perhaps an interest in land. During the worst years, they tightened their belts

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1. E.C.A., Extent Rolls for the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1634 and 1642.

and hoped to ride out their difficulties, perhaps with the help of loans from business connections or family. It is unlikely that any one indicator of merchant wealth or any one year of a business career can accurately portray a man's financial position. The advantage of the testaments is that they offer other details of business or domestic circumstances which are not available in tax rolls.

A recent article has investigated the merchant community of Edinburgh in the last thirty years of the sixteenth century from information recorded in their testaments.[1] It would be interesting to see whether the findings are relevant to the seventeenth-century merchant community and if not, to show where they differ. The following evidence derives from wills recorded in the period 1600-49.

In some respects, there were great changes from the earlier years particularly with regard to the range of merchant wealth. Of the 300 testaments studied for the thirty years 1570-1600, only seven exceeded £12,000 and thirty-six ranged between £3,000 and £12,000.[2] There were also approximately 300 merchant testaments registered in the years 1601-20 and a further 300 in the 1640s; in the former period, 37 exceeded £12,000 and 106 fell within the range £3,000 to £12,000, five and three times the sixteenth century figures, while in the 1640s, the corresponding numbers were 56 and 86. There were further differences at the opposite extreme; while one-third of merchant testaments were worth less than £500 in the period 1570-1600, this proportion had

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1. M.H.B. Sanderson, 'The Edinburgh Merchants in Society, 1570-1603; the Evidence of their Testaments' in I.B. Cowan and D. Shaw, The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland, (Edinburgh 1983), pp.183-199.
2. Ibid, p.184.

fallen to between one-quarter and one-fifth for the first half of the seventeenth century. This evidence suggests a definite rise in prosperity at a time when price inflation was considered to be much less significant than during the previous fifty years; it also concurs with Professor Donaldson's findings about the estates of small lairds and farmers, the average value of which doubled in the period 1600-40.[1]

It is worth remembering, however, that £12,000 Scots was only £1,000 sterling. To put matters into perspective, a 'substantial' London merchant was said to be worth between £5,000 and £10,000 sterling for much of the seventeenth century (£60,000 - £120,000 Scots), a 'rich' merchant up to £20,000 (£240,000 Scots) and a 'middling' merchant £1,000 to £5,000 (£12,000 - £60,000 Scots).[2] Many overseas traders from north of the border were, in fact, worth little more than the average London artisan or petty retailer. A survey of 630 Edinburgh merchant wills in the period 1600-49 revealed that 79 merchants would have been accounted 'middling' by London standards, only 8 would have been 'substantial' and none would have been 'rich'. However much Edinburgh considered itself to be a capital city and sustained that role within its own country, it was utterly overshadowed in any comparison with London. While Edinburgh might have entertained similar social aspirations to the English capital, within its own limited sphere, it could never compete in affluence; the gulf between the two cities was vast. In terms of wealth, it was

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1. G. Donaldson, Scotland - James V to James VII (Edinburgh 1965), p.242.
2. R. Grassby, 'The Personal Wealth of the Business Community in Seventeenth-Century England', E.H.R., 23, 1970, pp.228-9.

hardly less so between Edinburgh and the English provincial capitals, although they all fulfilled similar functions. The average gross estate of an Exeter merchant in 1640 was said to be around £1,900 and rising; an average Edinburgh merchant was lucky to amass one-third of that amount.[1] In a wealthy city such as Norwich, an alderman in 1600 was probably worth £20,000; not a single Edinburgh merchant left an estate of this value and very few handled sums of this magnitude even at the peak of their business careers.[2] (The comparison is possibly unfair in that no figures exist for an Edinburgh merchant's landed wealth while those for Norwich might have included real estate; without its inclusion, the difference in wealth would still have been considerable.) In Scottish terms, however, the Edinburgh merchant community appeared rich enough. The Commissariot record of Dumfries revealed only one merchant testament valued at over £9,000 (Scots), one at over £5,000 and six between £2,000 and £5,000 out of a total of 90 studied.[3]

In other respects, the seventeenth-century testaments are very similar to earlier ones. They all fail to provide much evidence of landed interest, industrial or commercial partnerships or details of personal and household goods. Little impression of domestic comfort can be gained as the stock phrase "the plenishing of his dwelling house with the abulziements of his bodie" covered these items.

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1. W.G. Hoskins, 'The Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', in S. Bindoff J. Hurstfield and C. Williams (eds.), Elizabethan Government and Society, (London, 1961), p.172.
2. J.T. Evans, Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics Religion and Government, 1620-1690 (1979), p.13.
3. W.K. Coutts, Social and Economic History of the Commissariot of Dumfries from 1600-1665 as disclosed by the Registers of Testaments. M. Litt., (Edinburgh 1982), p.75.

In many instances they were worth no more than £100, occasionally they reflected a merchant's social and financial position. James Barnes' domestic goods totalled £500, William Grays' £667 and Andrew Ainslies' £1,548 [1]; these three were among the few who left wills valued at over £60,000 and could therefore have been classed as substantial merchants by London standards. For some unknown reason, Patrick Telfer's spouse had the contents of her wardrobe individually registered when she died in 1649, providing an insight into the extent of a merchant wife's apparel. Among the list were the following items:-

> "ane blak satene gowne with twa pearling thereon, ane limon culloured satene gowne, ane double blak Spanish taffetie gowne with twa small pearling, ane blak double Spanishe petticoat, ane blak single taffetie gowne, ane orange taffetie wascot, ane grey serge house gowne, ane rid serge petticoat, ane quhyt tufted holland petticoat, ane rid frieze petticoat, ane sute of rid ryding cloathes....."[2]

The whole, together with some jewellery and household items, totalled £2,040. Telfer, incidentally, did not appear to be a particularly wealthy man. He owned two properties in 1635 which he rented for £231 and was never a councillor, although his wife obviously had a taste for finery.

A number of seventeenth-century testaments also make references to gold and silver items or 'reddie money', often held in a chest in the merchant's house. William Paterson had £2,200 in 'reddie gold and silver' according to his wife's testament of 1613, Thomas Cramond had £870 in cash lying in Danzig, Thomas Bannatyne had more than £3,000 in 1635 and Andrew Ainslie had £20,000 in cash in 1643.[3] References to

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1. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/64.
2. Ibid, CC8/8/64.
3. Ibid, CC8/8/48, CC8/8/52, CC8/8/57 and CC8/8/64.

gold and silverware include one dozen silver spoons belonging to John Veitche together with a silver belt weighing 4 ounces, valued at £12, and 26 silver spoons, 5 gold rings and other items of silver belonging to Walter Rankin and valued at £785 in 1646.[1]

The vast network of credit and debt is a common factor to both sixteenth and seventeenth century merchant testaments, together with the incidence of money-lending. It is not always possible to distinguish between small loans and money due in payment for goods but in examples where the inventory was small and the debts owed to the deceased were large, it would appear that lending was a substantial part of the merchant's business. The geographical extent of credit and debt has already been noted in a number of cases - some merchants undoubtedly had business connections throughout the whole of Scotland, while others concentrated on specific areas. However, those sections of a merchant estate which referred specifically to trade - his ships, stock and details of his trading ventures - will be considered in the relevant chapters on Edinburgh's trade.

Finally, there is the question of a merchant's social position, as an individual or as a member of a merchant dynasty, and the interrelated nature of his personal connections. There were undoubtedly certain families whose wealth spanned generations, in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are names which appeared regularly in the council records and the Register of Testaments - Inglis, Rae, McNaught, Cochrane, Morison in the earlier years of the seventeenth century, Ellis, Murray, Suittie, Trotter and others in the middle years, but the size and fluidity of the Edinburgh merchant

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1. Ibid, CC8/8/46 and CC8/8/61.

community prevented any families from dominating affairs of trade or council.

A wide range of personal connections undoubtedly existed within the merchant community. A high incidence of inter-marriage among merchant families has been noted for both sixteenth-century Edinburgh[1] and seventeenth-century Glasgow and it has been suggested that "all the families that counted became attached to an immense kinship web" and that "such a family grouping must have had economic implications".[2] A few examples of kinship and other ties within the seventeenth-century Edinburgh merchant community will illustrate these points.

Members of the Speir family, William, James, Thomas and Alexander, were all councillors in the first twenty years of the century. They intermarried with the Cochranes, James, Patrick and William and their families and with the McNaughts, and they introduced a number of outsiders, later prominent burgesses, to the merchant ranks; these included Patrick Wood, one of the wealthiest and most enterprising merchants of the 1630s, who married a daughter of James Speir, David Jonkin who married Margaret Speir in 1626, and Laurence Henderson, overseas trader and councillor, who was apprenticed to William Speir. James Rocheid did his future career no harm by marrying the daughter of John Trotter, a councillor and later landowner, while James Alison married the daughter of Walter Rankin, a rich merchant and property owner. James Lightbodie became the brother-in-law of John Kniblo and marriages were recorded between

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1. Sanderson, op.cit., p.184.
2. T.C. Smout, 'The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century', S.H.R., 1968, p.67.

Hilstons and Murrays, Raes and Edgars, and Farquhars and Richardsons, all names which appear in the list of merchant property owners (Appendix 2) and the 'inner' group of council members (Appendix 3). An intriguing personal and commercial tie is that between George Suittie and John Adinston who jointly owned two properties just off the High Street in 1635. Suittie had gained his burgess ticket in 1610 as the apprentice of Thomas Adinston, the father of John, and it is interesting that the two younger men later embarked on a business relationship. It would be a daunting task to investigate thoroughly the kinship ties of the 500-600 strong merchant community at this time but the above, and previous, examples suggest considerable interplay between families on a personal and commercial level.

The testaments of the early seventeenth century referred (somewhat quaintly) to various worthies who were usually former bailies, as 'ane honest and discreet man', or on one occasion 'ane honest and discreet woman' - the later testaments quickly dispensed with such courtesies. One way in which it has been possible to establish a merchant's social standing has traditionally been his appearance in the council chambers.[1]

The following pages will attempt to answer a number of questions relating to council membership; did wealth equal power - were the richest merchants more likely to become council members than those of more modest fortune? Were family background or business connections as important to the prospective councillor as wealth? Were the

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1. R.G. Lang, 'Social Origins and Social Aspirations of Jacobean London Merchants', E.H.R., 27, 1974 and M. Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation (Edinburgh 1981), pp.15-17.

council in fact a close-knit elite, into which entry was almost impossible for the true outsider? It is hoped to answer these questions by studying the council lists for the years 1620-59, particularly the central years from 1630 to 1649 for which information on wealth is also available. The question of politics has been excluded from this analysis - the political, and inextricably bound up with it, the religious history of Edinburgh at this time, have received some attention recently and it is felt that little space is available for a discussion of the political intrigues of the Edinburgh burgess community in an economic and social history.[1] A simple view of the complex religious issues will be taken - that provided one remained an orthodox and regular church-goer, there should have been no bar to membership of the Edinburgh town council. The question of craft councillors has also been omitted, largely on the grounds that individual craftsmen were less easily identified in seventeeth-century sources - they appeared on fewer occasions in the tax rolls, property lists, testaments and customs records which are the basis of our information.

A total of 141 men became councillors and office bearers in the forty years under review. Of these 46 were appointed only once in their lives, and a total of 34 obtained membership on either two or three occasions. These were excluded from a detailed analysis in order that efforts could be concentrated on the hard core of 61 men who regularly sat in the council chambers. To begin with, the qualifications for burgess-ship of both the total 141 and the 'inner'

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1. W.H. Makey, The Church of the Covenant: Revolution and Social Change in Scotland 1637-1651 (Edinburgh 1979) and D. Stevenson, The Scottish Revolution 1637-44 (1972).

group of 61 were considered, and compared with the burgess entry figures for the entire merchant community in the period 1600-49.

TABLE 4.3 SOCIAL ORIGINS OF MERCHANT COUNCILLORS OF EDINBURGH 1620-59
(percentages in brackets)

	All council Members	Unknowns removed	Merchant Burgesses 1600-49	'Inner' Group
Son of merchant	49 (35)	(40)	334 (22)	29 (48)
Son-in-law of merchant	25 (18)	(20)	375 (25)	11 (18)
Son of craftsman	2 (1)	(2)	91 (6)	2 (3)
Son-in-law of craftsman	4 (3)	(3)	177 (12)	1 (2)
Apprenticeship	24 (17)	(20)	357 (23)	11 (18)
Purchase	17 (12)	(14)	181 (12)	6 (10)
Gratis	1 (1)	(1)	6 (0.5)	-
Unknown	19 (13)			1
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	141		1521	61

Source: Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild Brethren, council lists in E.R.B.E.

Of the 141 council members, it was not possible to trace the burgess entry of 19, largely those with common names such as John Smith or men who obtained their burgess-ship before 1600. These were eliminated from the figures in order to facilitate comparisons.

The above table shows how unlikely it was for a merchant to become a councillor if his kinfolk were craftsmen. Having said that, it would seem to have been no more difficult for those from a craft background to progress to the 'inner' group of regular council members and office bearers than it was to join the council in the first place. Several of those who did were highly succesful men - John Kniblo, John Rynd, John Hilston and William Wilkie all had craft kinsmen but served as bailies or burgh treasurer. Kniblo married a merchant's daughter and it would appear from the records that his father was a merchant in all but name but the remaining three claimed burgess entry by marrying the daughters of a litster, a tailor and a baxter, presumably having no burgess kin of their own, and therefore came, in all likelihood,

either from the unfree class or from outwith the city.

Roughly 20% of councillors became burgesses by right of their apprenticeship and between 10% and 15% by purchase, but over 60% claimed merchant fathers or fathers-in-law, a higher percentage than was found for merchant burgesses as a whole. Nevertheless, this indicates that at least one-third of the Edinburgh town council was recruited from families outside the Edinburgh merchant community and that the majority of these either purchased their way into the burgess-ship of the city or entered by apprenticeship. As an apprentice to a prominent merchant, a young man had the chance of developing wide-ranging business acquaintances which might have helped him to further his careers in trade and local government. It was certainly possible to break in to the charmed circle of council members but the right connections were probably important. It was an easier matter if one was related to an Edinburgh merchant family but the very numbers within the merchant community ensured that the council did not become dominated by a handful of powerful dynasties, particularly after the first twenty years of the century. There are instances of fathers and sons serving on the council together - James Ainslie and his son Andrew in 1622, William Dick and his son in 1642, Sir John Arnot, provost over a long period of years in the 1590s and 1610s, and his son John in 1615, George Suittie and his son in 1659, and two brothers, Gilbert and Robert Acheson served together in 1623. But there is an impression, admittedly untested, that very few families continued to take an active part in council affairs for longer than two generations. Time did not permit a proper survey of this topic but thirty to fifty years was long enough for a family to rise and fall again or to rise and rise, perhaps from business to land

ownership.[1]

Having examined the social origins of council members, we must turn to their financial position. Was participation in the council reserved for the wealthiest merchants or was it possible for the 'average' merchant to gain entry? A glance at the list of names in Appendix 3, the 'inner' group of 61, suggests that council membership was neither reserved for the most prosperous nor even the financially solvent; there are names such as Gilbert Acheson, Hew Hamilton and Gilbert Williamson, all of whom dealt in packs of cloth across the border at some time in their careers and Thomas Moodie, Thomas Charteris and John Rynd, wealthy men on paper but labouring under enormous debts. These aspects of a merchant's business, however, did not result in his exclusion from the council. Many of those listed were known to have been very rich - John Fleming left £46,660 in his will, William Gray left £98,751, Andrew Ainslie £110,655, while others paid high tax assessments - Stephen Boyd £140, John Fairholm £150, James Loch and David McCall £133, but there were other undoubtedly wealthy men who took little or no part in council affairs. Some, like James Barnes and David Jonkin, have already been noted but there were numerous others. John Carstairs lived in an expensive property, at £267 assessed rental, and was extented for £240 in 1634, one of the highest in the burgh, but never became a councillor; the same was true of Thomas Bannatyne who owned three properties, was extented for £220 in 1634 and left nearly £9,000 in his will, and Gilbert Fraser who had few properties but left an estate of £39,000 when he died. It was not

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1. Council members were supposed to be active traders not primarily estate managers/owners.

essential for a man to be rich in order to become a council member and not all rich men wished to become involved in council business.

Because the affairs of council members tend to be well-documented, it has been possible to estimate their 'average' wealth according to three different criteria. Taking the 'inner' group of 61, no information was available for six of their number, largely as a result of their age - they were either too young or too old to be represented in the tax rolls of the 1630s - or because their testaments were not extant. Of the remaining 55, 44 were known to have occupied property in the burgh in 1635, 32 registered testaments at some point in their career, and 35 were found in the extent rolls for either 1634 or 1642. Details of wealth according to each of the three sources are listed in Appendix 3 and figures of average wealth are given below. It was decided to remove William Dick from the list because his wealth was so much greater than that of any other merchant that it distorted any 'average'. The same exercise for the remaining 80 occasional council members proved to be less successful. Information was found to be available for only one-third of that number - 38 were not represented in the tax rolls because of their age, and testaments were not available for a further 15. Of the remaining 27, 20 were identified as property owners, 18 were noted in the tax rolls and 18 testaments were found in the registers. The findings are given below.

TABLE 4.4 AVERAGE WEALTH OF MERCHANT COUNCILLORS OF EDINBURGH 1620-59

	Group 1 - 55 out of 61		Group 2 - 27 out of 80	
	Number	Average (£)	Number	Average (£)
Testaments	32	12,700	18	22,600
Extent Rolls	35	108	18	96
Property Rental (total)	44	380	20	453
Total years on council	452	8	42	1-2

Any conclusions based on these figures must be guarded for a number of reasons. Working closely with individuals highlights the possibility of mistaken identity - some people were virtually untraceable because both their family and christian names were commonly found in the burgh. There were at least three merchants bearing the names John Inglis, John Johnston and John Morison who were actively trading in the years under review and there were several instances of fathers and sons with the same name; it was not always possible to distinguish between John Trotter, James Rae and James Murray, elder and younger. The limited information available for the group of occasional council members makes it difficult to interpret the figures with any degree of certainty and, overall, there is the problem of chance in the assessment of an individual's tax or the value of his estate in any one year.

It is felt that some explanation will have to be offered for the large number of five-figure estates (11 out of 18) in Group 2 which raised the average testament value to £10,000 above its equivalent in Group 1. Not only are Group 1 estates of this value outnumbered (10 out of 32) but it would seem that some irregular council members were wealthier than many of the elite group of merchant councillors and office holders. It is conceivable that those with limited council service were able to escape the financial pressures of prolonged council membership and had more time to concentrate on money-making enterprises. It is perhaps worth quoting the findings of the historian of seventeenth-century Ipswich on this topic:-

> "The ruling body.....comprised only a small proportion of the well-to-do members of the community, since there were always men of substance in the town who preferred to avoid public life and its burdens."[1 - footnote overleaf]

This point might be further illustrated by examining the 56 merchant testaments valued at £12,000 and over which were registered between 1640 and 1649, and therefore reflected the careers of individuals in the previous two decades. It was found that over two-thirds of the testaments belonged to men who never once became councillors and that if those with limited council service (less than 4 years) were included, the proportion rose to over three-quarters. Although politics and plague might have influenced or cut short careers in local government, the available evidence suggests that a surprisingly high number of wealthy merchants had no wish, or for some reason were unable, to enter public life. (It is unlikely that young men who might have become councillors were unable to fulfil that ambition because their lives were cut short by plague.) Council membership was not confined to middle-aged and seasoned burgesses. While many merchants had to wait more than ten years before attaining council membership, others reached it very shortly after their burgess entry. Andrew Ainslie first appeared in the council lists of 1622, five years after becoming a burgess, Edward Edgar in 1625, four years after his burgess entry, James Rocheid in 1635 (five years after), William Trotter in 1636 (six years after), John Jossie in 1640 (six years after.)

Wealth and political power were not synonymous in Edinburgh, at least during the second quarter of the seventeenth century. A definition of wealth, however, is not easily arrived at, given the limits of the research material. A simple example, an attempt to identify

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1. M. Reed, 'Economic Structure and Change in Seventeenth-Century Ipswich' in P. Clark (ed.), Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England, (1979), p.91.

the ten wealthiest merchants in the city during the years 1630-49, will illustrate the point. Table 4.5 is composed of three groups; Group A lists the ten wealthiest merchants according to the tax roll of 1634, Group B is based on those who registered testaments in this period, and whose names also figured in the Annuity Tax of 1635, and Group C records those for whom no other information exists, save their testament. Addditional information for Groups A and B, such as details of council membership, is also given; for Group C, the best that can be said is that their testaments indicate that all the individuals were actively involved in commerce in the burgh.

The difference in the composition of the groups is remarkable and highlights the difficulty of establishing the wealthiest members of any community when only a single source of information, either tax rolls or testaments alone, is available. It also suggests the fluidity of a large merchant community, where few people were sufficiently wealthy to dominate financial affairs for long periods of time, and perhaps the volatility of merchant fortunes. Although the sample is very small, the impression gained from a comparison of the two tax rolls of 1634 and 1642 is that few of the wealthiest men in the first roll were still in the top bracket eight years later. The relatively short span of a burgess' career probably ensured him a very limited number of years 'at the top' and in the absence of merchant dynasties, there was a regular turnover of personnel.

Although only two names appear in both Groups A and B, a glance at alternative sources of wealth indicates that many of those in Group B had high tax assessments while several in Group A left five-figure estates. The majority would have been accounted wealthy by Scottish standards and their names have been encountered in other aspects of

Edinburgh's commercial life.

TABLE 4.5

WEALTHIEST MEMBERS OF THE EDINBURGH MERCHANT COMMUNITY 1630-49

GROUP A	Extent Roll 1634 (£)	Estate Value (£)	Property Value (£)	Council Years
William Gray	433	98,751	200	12
Thomas Moodie	367	-35,274	373	4
James Murray	300	15,361	360	4
John Carstairs	240	-	267	-
James Rae	230	49,467	560	3
Thomas Bannatyne	220	8,943	50	-
Patrick Wood	200	-	333	1
Ronald Murray	180	10,022	200	-
John Smith	167	-	233	12
James Nasmyth	150	3,480	-	1

GROUP B	Estate Value (£)	Extent Roll 1634 (£)	Property Value (£)	Council Years
Andrew Ainslie	110,655	40	240	8
William Gray	98,751	433	200	12
James Barnes	62,230	-	186	1
Alex. Monteith	58,937	-	120	1
James Rae	49,467	230	560	3
John Fleming	46,600	140	133	5
John Trotter (el.)	36,988	-	253	3
David Jonkin	35,809	100	150	1
James Scott	31,330	110	233	-
* John Inglis	27-30,000	100	929	1

GROUP C	Estate Value (£)
Archibald Paton	72,035
Louis Dick	69,752
Thomas Byres	44,138
Gilbert Fraser	38,744
Malcolm Fleming	38,224
David Graham	29,724
George Arnot	29,314
George Walker	26,221
William Sandilands	25,082
George Shaw	25,447

* Two men of this name left estates in the 1640s, one valued at £27,284, the other at £30,401. As before, William Dick has not been included in the lists as his wealth was wholly exceptional.

It is the obscurity of the personnel in Group C which is surprising - it seems curious that here were men of considerable fortune who did not own property in the burgh, who did not join the council, whose names were missing from the available customs records, who led lives almost completely undocumented in seventeenth century sources. (Dick and Byres were both landowners' sons, Fraser's name alone appears in the property list and he and Sandilands made occasional shipments in the 1620s customs books, Walker was a council member on two occasions, the remainder are unknown.) Their anonymity seems to indicate the existence of a mercantile sector which maintained a low profile in burgh affairs, members of which might have operated outwith the confines of the burgh, both physically and in terms of the law, while retaining, in name, their membership of the burgess community.

Few of the very wealthiest men therefore were regular council members. One reason for this, mentioned in relation to Ipswich merchants, might have been the expense of public life. As early as 1605, an Edinburgh council act had been passed making the acceptance of burghal office compulsory under heavy penalties.[1] It had apparently become increasingly difficult to fill the posts of Dean of Guild and burgh treasurer which were considered to be onerous and expensive. In time of need, the council usually sought short-term loans from within its own ranks and it was from the 1630s onwards, under the financial impositions of Charles I, that Edinburgh's debts began to rise alarmingly. It is possible that the attractions of council participation declined as the financial burdens associated with such positions increased. It is equally possible that the

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1. E.R.B.E.,1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.xxxv.

expense of regular burghal office resulted in lower estate values for many 'inner' council members than for those who saw little council service. (It must be remembered, however, that debts owing to the deceased, in the form of loans, for example, sometimes took months, if not years, to collect and might not have appeared in a man's original testament, resulting in an apparently low estate value.)

In addition to council service, there were many other claims on a merchant's time and money. David Jonkin, one of the managers of the city's weaving manufactory together with John Trotter elder, David McCall, David Murray and James Nairn, and a council member for one year in 1630-31, was also treasurer for the building of the new church in the north-west quarter of the city. There is a note in the council records of 1637 asking that he be discharged from this duty as he was obliged to go out of the country on matters of business.[1] The extentors of the burgh tax roll in 1634, responsible for its collection, included Jonkin again, Andrew Ainslie, John Rynd and William Trotter, while the extentors of the Annuity Tax in 1635, responsible both for assessment of the properties and collection of the tax, included Thomas Charteris, John Fleming, Robert Acheson and Laurence Henderson. All of these men were prominent traders with businesses to run as well as burgh duties to perform.

Financial commitments were also considerable. Both George Suittie and James Rae lent substantial sums of money in the 1620s to pay the expenses of the Commissioners of the Royal Burghs of Scotland on their visits to London.[2] In addition to ordinary and extra-

1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41 (Edinburgh 1935), p.187.
2. J.D. Marwick (ed.), Extracts from the Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland 1615-76, (Edinburgh 1878), p.174-5;p.251.

ordinary taxes which became more frequent during the reign of Charles I, new public building programmes necessitated taxes on parishioners and loans from council members. The building of the new Tron Church in the south-east quarter of the city was financed by a tax on local parish members and Alexander Clerk, Stephen Boyd, James Loch, Laurence Henderson and David McCall, all merchant burgesses, were amongst those who contributed; and it was the membership of a council committee, George Suittie, James Rocheid, Henderson again and James Ellis who financed the importation of copper sheeting for the roof of the church.[1] James Rocheid, as burgh treasurer in 1637, was said to have taken great debts upon himself, and loans of money were frequently obtained from other office bearers, notably the four bailies, or former bailies.[2] The tortuous financial proceedings within the council chambers at this time can best be illustrated by the following example from the burgh records:-

> "The council understanding that John Edgar, treasurer to the Parliament House was overspent in large sums and had no money in his hands for carrying forward the work.... ordered the treasurer to borrow 20,000 merks to repay him and to continue the work till Whitsunday. Also, as they owed Thomas Mudye(Moodie) the total sum of 22,000 merks, borrowed at three separate times, the treasurer was to borrow and repay 2,000 merks and give bond for the remaining 20,000 merks. As they owed the Kirk Session 15,000 merks and as the said Kirk Session required a part of their money, the treasurer was to borrow and repay them 5,000 merks and give bond for the remainder. The said treasurer borrowed for these purposes 15,000 merks from John Jowssie(Jossie) and 12,000 merks from George Suittie. Bonds are to be given to each of them and, because 6,055 merks was due to George Suittie, the treasurer is to repay him the 55 merks and give bond for the total 18,000 merks. And as there was 13,000 merks due to Mr. John Skein, the treasurer was ordered to borrow the said sum which he declared he had borrowed from William Fairlie of Bruntsfield, to whom a bond is to be given." [3]

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1. M. Wood, 'The Tron Church', B.O.E.C., 29, 1956, p.96 and p.106-7.
2. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), p. 195.
3. Ibid., pp.197-8.

It is no wonder that some merchants chose not to seek council membership and tried as far as possible to operate outwith burgh control.

A study of Edinburgh in the later sixteenth century put forward the view that government of the burgh was by a small and select oligarchy and it might be pertinent to test this assumption for the second quarter of the seventeenth century.[1] There are remarkable similarities in the figures for council membership. Of approximately 360 merchants in 1565, only one-quarter sat on the council at some point in their lives and of those, less than half, between 35 and 40 men, were said to have been "actively involved" in burgh affairs. Assuming a merchant community of roughly 600 in the period 1620-59, 141 (or about 25%) sat on the council at least once but we have already noted that regular membership (i.e. for four or more years) was confined to 61 individuals, or 10% of the whole merchant body. This proportion is very similar to that given for the later sixteenth century and seems to indicate that power was still reserved in the hands of the few (although we have seen that this might have been a matter of choice). While power rested with a very small proportion of the merchant community, two points should be borne in mind, the first concerning the term 'merchant'. It should be remembered that almost half of Edinburgh's 600 merchants were simple burgesses, involved only in domestic trade, and scarcely better off than many craftsmen. Many of them lacked the opportunity for social and financial advancement and did not necessarily aspire to political power, although there were always some who, by judicious marriage, apprenticeship or thrift, were able to ascend the ladder and further their political ambitions. It

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1. M. Lynch, Edinburgh and the Reformation, (Edinburgh 1981),p.15.

would be wrong, however, to think exclusively in terms of a powerful oligarchy scrambling to positions of authority on the backs of their down-trodden brethren. It is probably a misrepresentation to talk of council membership as reserved for 25% of the merchant community and power resting with only 10% of the whole. It might be more realistic to suggest that few domestic traders could have hoped to achieve council membership within their lifetimes (although ambitious offspring might do so), that many of them, and some wealthy merchants also, had no desire to serve on the council, but that perhaps two-thirds of overseas traders became councillors, be it for only a year or two.

Furthermore, any discussion of council domination by a small, select oligarchy brings us back to a definition of wealthy. It has been suggested that "the wealthier a merchant was, the more likely he was both to sit on the council and to hold office" and figures from the sixteenth century tax rolls have been used to justify this statement.[1] Research has indicated that many of the wealthiest merchants did not serve on the council at all during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, or only for an isolated year. The impression is one of council membership becoming more frequently available to men of apparently modest fortunes, having tax assessments of less than £100 and testaments valued at less than £3,000. The Acheson brothers, for example, all served as bailies for a number of years but fell within this category of wealth, as did Edward Farquhar, John Denholm and John Kniblo. There must have been a level of wealth below which it would have been impossible to attain the status of councillor, in the same

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1. Ibid., p.16.

way as guild membership was supposed to be reserved for merchants who possessed at least 1,000 merks in 1585, (although it is unlikely that any fixed sum of money was laid down as a threshold). There were probably factors of greater significance in the process of council selection than a man's wealth. The question of willingness has already been discussed. Family background must have been important in many cases; for the outsider, the right connections, through marriage or commercial partnerships, were probably vital. For those whose face fitted, who were respectable, available, ambitious, knew the right people and had the appropriate religious and political convictions, council membership was attainable. Its benefits, outside those of status, power and influence, were dubious. If various testaments are to be believed, it did not necessarily ensure a passport to success or comfort and security in old age. Many of Edinburgh's merchant councillors could only have been accounted wealthy in relation to their poorer fellow burgesses and to the masses of underprivileged persons living in the burgh. Few of them were 'wealthy' by any other standard, as we have already seen.

The anomalies contained within the documents available to the twentieth-century historian result in any assessment of wealth becoming a subject fraught with difficulty. What, in conclusion, should be made of Andrew Ainslie, with his low tax assessments and vast fortune? Had he been living today, we might have suspected that he employed an excellent accountant. What position in a merchant hierarchy should be accorded to men such as Thomas Charteris, Gilbert Williamson or Ronald Murray, for whom indicators of wealth fluctuate wildly over a period of years? It is probably best to remember that neither success nor mediocrity necessarily spanned an individual's entire career. In

attempting to paint pictures of real characters from the past from very limited evidence, a single reference point in a business life might be completely atypical of that life as a whole.

The question of merchant wealth per se and the related issue of wealth as a prime factor in council membership are complex problems because of the nature of the source material and the question mark which hangs over its reliability. No attempt will be made to draw firm conclusions from the foregoing discussion but it is hoped that attention has been focussed on the difficulties of assessing wealth from tax rolls and testaments. They should perhaps be viewed with a little of the scepticism normally reserved for customs records.

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At the beginning of this chapter, it was noted that the city was divided into twelve administrative districts for the purposes of taxation. By using information available in the List of Property Owners and the Extent Roll for Annuity Tax, it has been possible not only to map the districts but to find out something about their composition - the number of properties, their assessed rental and the number of tenants housed in each; the 'poorest' and 'wealthiest', the most crowded and least densely-populated districts; and the areas most favoured by the merchant property owners of the city.

Edinburgh's geographical position, cramped and confined by physical features, meant that even in 1635 it was essentially a medieval city.[1] Matters of daily business, commercial and personal, took place within a very small area and too great a distinction cannot

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1. For a discussion of the medieval burgh in Scotland, see I. Adams, The Making of Urban Scotland, (London 1978), p.11-12.

therefore be drawn between the twelve districts. The only space for expansion in the northern half of the city was upwards, hemmed in as it was by the waters of the Nor' Loch, and it was here, in the north-west quarter, that tenements up to fourteen storeys high were built. In the southern half of the city, narrow crowded closes descended steeply to the Cowgate and Grassmarket, the other main thoroughfare of the burgh, running east-west, parallel to the more fashionable High Street, but beyond it there was still land available for building in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Figure 3 shows the external boundaries of the city, with the five gates or ports in the city walls and the internal divisions, with four quarters, three districts to each quarter.[1] In general terms, the north-west quarter was the main commercial area of the burgh and the north-east had the fewest properties and was the least densely-populated, while the two southern quarters were more mixed; in some respects they both mirrored their counterparts to the north of the High Street. Although it is sometimes convenient to divide the city into quarters (see Table 4.7), it is in many ways more realistic to think in terms of a central block or area of six districts (S.W.1 and 2, N.W. 2 and 3, N.E.1 and S.E.1) enclosed by peripheral areas (N.E.2 and 3, S.E.2 and 3, N.W.1 and S.W.3). This division emphasises the greater number of properties within the central area (even after allowance has been made for the density of small shops and booths in N.W.3) but the almost equal number of tenants in both groupings draws attention to the higher concentration of people in some of the poorer,

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1. I am grateful to Dr. W. Makey, Edinburgh City Archivist, for allowing me to use and adapt certain features of this map, the internal divisions of which were devised by him.

outlying areas closest to the city walls.

TABLE 4.6 DIVISION OF THE CITY INTO CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL AREAS

NO. OF PROPERTIES				NO. OF TENANTS			
Central		Peripheral		Central		Peripheral	
N.W.3	195	N.E.2	73	N.W.3	439	N.E.2	268
N.W.2	101	N.E.3	153	N.W.2	199	N.E.3	456
N.E.1	111	S.E.2	104	N.E.1	283	S.E.2	372
S.E.1	146	S.E.3	113	S.E.1	450	S.E.3	411
S.W.2	158	N.W.1	113	S.W.2	504	N.W.1	494
S.W.1	127	S.W.3	80	S.W.1	424	S.W.3	140
	838		636		2299		2141

Source: 'A List of Property Owners in Edinburgh, 1635', B.O.E.C.,13, 1924.

Much of the detail concerning the twelve districts is given in the following tables. Figures relating to S.W.3 have been bracketed because the survey for this district is incomplete, a page of the manuscript having been lost. It is assumed to have been similar to N.W.1 in composition although less crowded.

It will be noted from Table 4.7 overleaf that S.W.2 and N.W.1 were the most populous districts, both bordering the top (or Castle) end of the High Street, and that S.W.2 and N.W.3 contained the largest number of properties and contributed the highest totals in tax. At the opposite extreme, N.E.2 and N.W.2 had the fewest properties and tenants and contributed least in tax.

Table 4.8 overleaf sets out both the average number of tenants per property and the average assessed rental per tenant; the latter is also mapped out in Figure 3. The first set of figures tends to support the earlier statement that the peripheral areas contained the highest densities of population while the central areas, with their higher ratio of business premises, were less crowded. The second set of figures illustrates how the most wealthy districts, overall, were

the three central ones to the north of the High Street, and the poorest were those in the north-east sector of the city and in the teeming closes of N.W.1.

TABLE 4.7 PROPERTIES, TENANTS AND TAX COLLECTED IN EDINBURGH, 1635

	Number of Properties	Number of Tenants	Total Tax (£ Scots)
N.W.1	113	494	14,823
N.W.2	101	199	12,759
N.W.3	195	439	25,572
Total for N.W.	409	1132	53,154
N.E.1	111	283	15,793
N.E.2	73	268	8,807
N.E.3	153	456	13,389
Total for N.E.	337	1007	37,989
S.E.1	146	450	15,527
S.E.2	104	372	18,121
S.E.3	113	411	16,625
Total for S.E.	363	1233	50,273
S.W.1	127	424	16,416
S.W.2	158	504	25,302
(S.W.3	80	140	8,983)
Total for S.W.	365	1068	50,702

Source: 'A List of Property Owners in Edinburgh, 1635', B.O.E.C., 13 1924.

Table 4.8 also shows the distribution of the highest-valued properties, the 13% for which the assessment was more than £100. Over 40% were concentrated in three districts, a further 35% in four districts, less than 25% in the remainder. While four of the six central districts contained large numbers of expensive properties, as might have been expected, it is interesting to note the popularity of the south-east quarter in this respect. A later survey of merchant property owners will confirm that many had their own dwelling house in this part of the city.

TABLE 4.8

Average Number of Tenants per Property		Average Assessed Rental per Tenant (£)		Rental Values over £100 (percentages)	
1. N.W.1	4.37	1. (S.W.3	£64)	1. N.W.3	17
2. N.E.2	3.67	2. N.W.2	64	2. S.W.2	14
3. S.E.3	3.63	3. N.W.3	58	3. S.E.2	12
4. S.E.2	3.57	4. N.E.1	56	4. N.E.1	8
5. S.W.1	3.33	5. S.W.2	50	5. S.E.1	8
6. S.W.2	3.18	6. S.E.2	49	6. S.E.3	8
7. S.E.1	3.08	7. S.E.3	40	7. S.W.1	8
8. N.E.3	3.00	8. S.W.1	39	8. N.W.1	7
9. N.E.1	2.50	9. S.E.1	34	9. N.W.2	6
10. N.W.3	2.25	10. N.E.2	33	10. N.E.2	5
11. N.W.2	1.97	11. N.W.1	30	11. N.E.3	4
12. (S.W.3	1.75)	12. N.E.3	29	12. (S.W.3	2)

Source: 'A List of Property Owners in Edinburgh, 1635', B.O.E.C., 13 1924 and E.C.A., Extent Roll for Annuity Tax.

Table 4.9 gives the distribution of merchant and craft-owned properties within the twelve districts. A total of 354 properties were owned by around 160 merchants, 143 properties by roughly 130 craftsmen. Merchant-owned properties were heavily concentrated in the north-west quarter, the business area of the city, while craft-owned properties were mostly found in the north-east and south-east quarters where property valuations tended to be lower.

The majority of merchant-owned properties were let to others but in most cases, some property was retained for a merchant's own use. The locations of their dwelling house (and perhaps business premises) make interesting reading. Nearly half of the merchants who inhabited property valued at over £100, the more affluent members of the community, chose to live in the north-west quarter, less than 10% in the north-east. It seems strange that John Trotter, elder, should own and inhabit property valued at over £250 in the unfashionable N.E.3 district, which had the highest concentration of craftsmen property owners and the lowest average property assessments. It seems likely

that by 1635, this was merely his urban 'base'; no doubt he preferred to spend most of his time on his estate of Mortonhall, some six miles south of the city.

TABLE 4.9 DISTRIBUTION OF MERCHANT AND CRAFT PROPERTIES
(percentages in brackets)

	Merchant Properties	Craft Properties
N.W.1	50 (14)	15 (10)
N.W.2	31 (9)	7 (5)
N.W.3	70 (20)	4 (3)
N.E.1	17 (5)	17 (12)
N.E.2	10 (3)	9 (6)
N.E.3	27 (8)	21 (15)
S.E.1	23 (6)	20 (14)
S.E.2	21 (6)	11 (8)
S.E.3	28 (8)	16 (11)
S.W.1	15 (4)	8 (6)
S.W.2	43 (12)	10 (7)
(S.W.3	19 (5)	5 (3)
	354	143

Source: E.C.A., Extent Roll for Annuity Tax, 1635.

The greatest numbers of well-known merchants lived in N.W.2 and 3 districts. Here William Gray, David Jonkin, John Kniblo, William Dick, George Suittie, Thomas Moodie, James Murray and James Rae could all be found, rubbing shoulders with advocates and members of the nobility on their visits to the capital, with the Lord Bishop of Glasgow, the Laird of Polwarth, Lady Stenhope and Lord Innerteil. The most fashionable part of N.W.1, the houses at the Castlehill, the extreme western end of the High Street, also had their share of merchants, Andrew Symson, John Carstairs, Joseph Marjoribanks, and nobles, the Earl of Lothian and Lord Couper.

As noted earlier, the south-east quarter of the city had a surprisingly high number of expensive properties and affluent owners. In S.E.3 lived Andrew Ainslie, James Loch, John Sinclair, Laurence Henderson and Andrew Purves, together with Lady Yester (in a property

valued at £500, the same as William Dick's), the Lord Bishop of Galloway, and James Livingston of the Bedchamber. S.E.2 was home for Ronald Murray, David McCall, the Laird of Pencaitland and the Earl of Galloway, and S.E.1 housed James Rocheid and Stephen Boyd. Almost 30% of the most affluent merchants lived in this quarter.

S.W.2 was the only other district which was popular with the business community, flanking the south side of the Lawnmarket, the upper High Street. Here, owners and tenants included James Barnes, James Troupe and John Hilston together with my Lord Chancellor (at a rental of £667), Lords Haddington, Foster, Ormiston and Torphichen and Sir Thomas Hope.

Before concluding this brief account of property within the city, it is worth remembering that merchant tenants and owners formed only a small part of the total population assessed in the 1635 Annuity Tax. There were 3,901 inhabited houses in the city and even amongst the 508 properties assessed at over £100, individuals known to be merchants accounted for less than 25% of the tenants, although there might have been others unrecognised. Many of the most expensive properties were rented by other wealthy inhabitants of the city, nobles and gentlemen, lawyers and ministers, widows, administrators and officials, all in-dwellers or honorary burgesses rather than active freemen of the burgh. There is no way of ascertaining what impact their wealth had on the economic life of Edinburgh.

FIGURE 3

EDINBURGH IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

AVERAGE ASSESSED RENTAL
PER TENANT

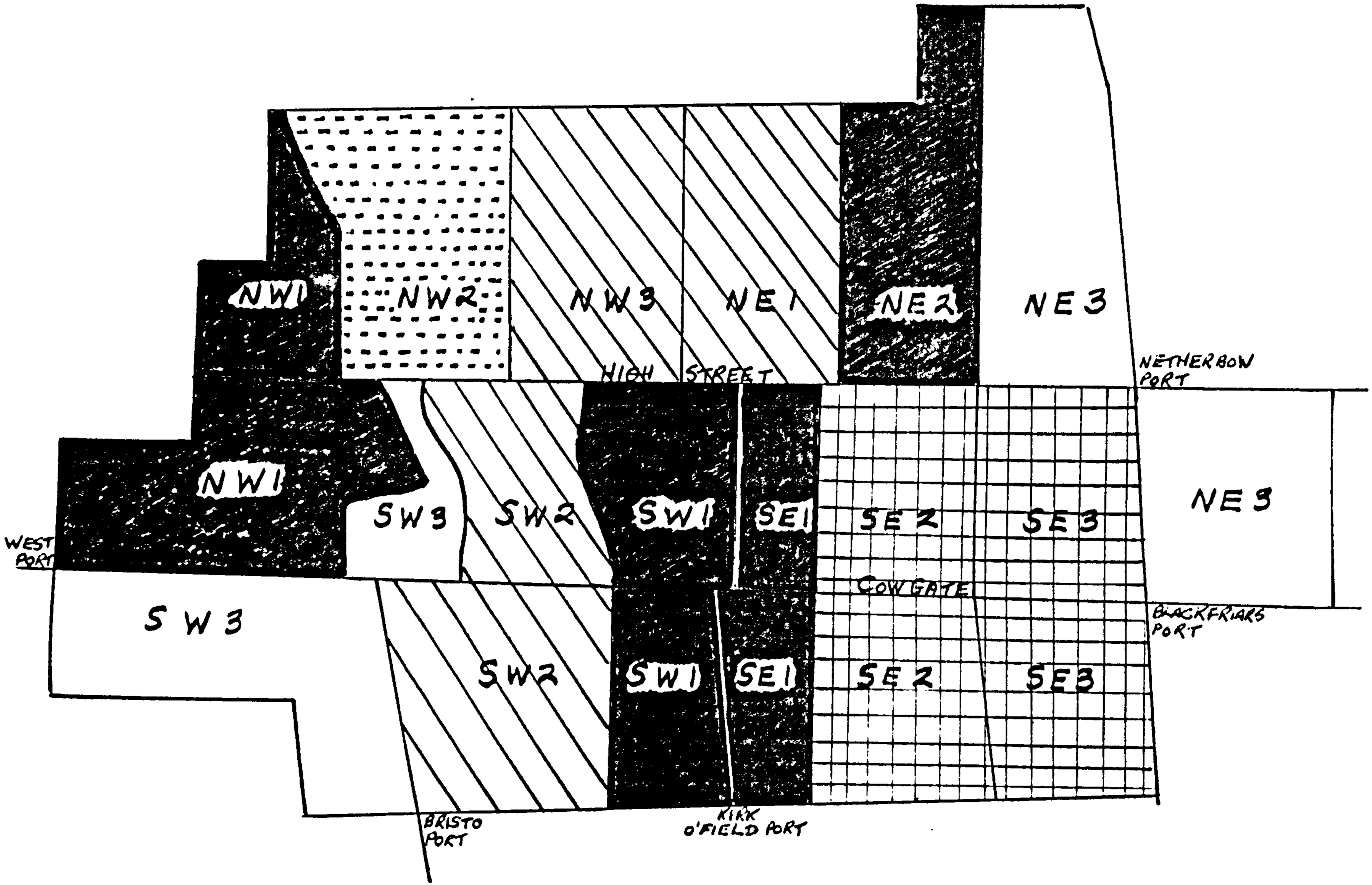

OVER £60


OVER £50


OVER £40


OVER £30


UNDER £30


NW1
NW2
NW3
NE1
NE2
NE3
HIGH STREET
NETHERBOW PORT
NW1
SW3
SW2
SW1
SE1
SE2
SE3
NE3
WEST PORT
COWGATE
BLACKFRIARS PORT
SW3
SW2
SW1
SE1
SE2
SE3
BRISTO PORT
KIRK O'FIELD PORT

CHAPTER 5 TRADE AND TRADERS

"Foreign trade formed the hinge on which the whole prosperity of the country turned. All economic growth began with its expansion, and all economic decline was foreshadowed by its contraction."[1]

"Edinburgh merchants may be said to have been the principal founders of Scottish commerce."[2]

"The inhabitants (of Edinburgh), relieved from all external claims, save by taxation, seem to have devoted themselves to trade and to have prospered exceedingly."[3]

The foregoing sentences are quoted in order to demonstrate the importance of trade to seventeenth-century Scotland, in both a national and a local context, and consequently the importance of the traders who were involved in its various branches. Commercial transactions abroad were a pre-requisite of economic growth for a country such as Scotland, small, backward and poor, on the periphery of European trade both geographically and quantitatively. As a nation, she could supply larger amounts of certain primary products and basic manufactures than her predominately rural population could absorb, while remaining incapable of producing some essential and many luxury items which her more sophisticated town-dwellers craved. Such an imbalance created the basis for foreign trade, and the wealth so engendered enabled Edinburgh and many smaller burghs to expand and prosper when the commercial outlook was bright,

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1. T.C. Smout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union, 1660-1707, (Edinburgh 1963), p.23 hereafter, Smout, 'Scottish Trade'.
2. A. Heron, The Rise and Progress of the Company of the City of Edinburgh, 1681-1902, (Edinburgh 1903), p.1.
3. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.ix.

while loss or curtailment of trade during the stormier years of the century frequently led to stagnation and decline.

Considerable research has already been carried out on Scottish trade - national coverage at both the beginning and end of the century has given us a picture of the men, the methods, the ships and the cargoes involved, while studies of local shipping movements have confirmed and embellished some points.[1] The peculiar position of Edinburgh, the first burgh in size and wealth, the centre of Scottish government, church and society, and a national entrepot with an extensive hinterland, can highlight aspects of trade which marked out the capital as different from other burghs in Scotland but can also illustrate similarities which were common to all the nation's trading communities. A study of Edinburgh's records should further enable us to interweave general with specific and national with local aspects of commerce.

It is proposed to deal with facets of Edinburgh's trade in two separate chapters, both of which are intended to show how generalisations about Scottish trade can or cannot be applied to the capital city. The first, covering topics such as the problems and hazards encountered in trade, the size, ownership and value of the ships employed, the groups which constituted the traders of the city and the amount of specialisation in trading ventures, will be illustrated from a variety of local sources which will, in some

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade' and S.G.E. Lythe, The Economy of Scotland, 1550-1625, (Edinburgh, 1960) hereafter Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', for national coverage and Aberdeen Shore Work Accounts, 1596-1670 ed.L.B. Taylor (Aberdeen 1972) and Dundee Shipping Lists in The Compt Buik of David Wedderburne, Merchant of Dundee, ed. A.H. Millar (Scottish History Society, Vol. XXVIII, 1898) for local shipping movements.

instances, offer contrasts with existing views based on nationally obtained information. The second chapter will be concerned with the details of the surviving customs records for Edinburgh and Leith in the period 1600-80, with imports and exports, home ports and destinations, assessing how far and in what way Edinburgh's trade differed from that of the other Scottish burghs, attempting to quantify some branches of trade and looking at the exploits of a handful of merchants in their day-to-day business. For all merchants were burgesses and all burgesses were essentially 'tradespeople'. The main privilege of burgess-ship was undoubtedly the right to trade and therefore, by examining the port books and customs accounts of the city, we are able to gain an insight into the burgess community at work.

Who were the traders who risked themselves and their stocks in foreign trade? If the burgh laws had been strictly applied, those whose names appear in the shipping lists should have been both burgesses and members of the guild. As a rough indication of whether this was true, samples were taken from the records and these suggested that approximately 75% of those named were properly qualified i.e. recorded in the Burgess Roll of the city. The remaining 25% fell into three groups - those who were simple burgesses, those who were burgesses of another town and those who were missing from the register altogether. Some of the simple burgesses might have been recently qualified apprentices trusted to act as factors for their masters' cargoes (apparently a not uncommon practice) while others actually acquired guild membership at a later date.[1] An example of this was

1. T.C. Smout, A History of the Scottish People (1969), p.154 hereafter Smout, 'Scottish People'.

Robert Salmond, a fairly prominent name in the records, who became a burgess in 1616 but did not qualify as a guild brother until 1627. In the intervening years, he traded abroad on a considerable scale.

Some who delayed their guild entry may have been omitted from the Burgess Roll in error but others had little intention of paying their dues, unless caught, and were therefore illegal traders in the eyes of the law.[1] The burgh records furnish details of such a trader, George Logan, a resident in Leith who was penalised for importing 1000 deals. The town confiscated half that number, the remaining 500 went to "his Majesties' use" and Logan was cautioned to desist from using a freeman's trade "till he be made frie". There is no way of distinguishing between genuine errors and frauds but it would appear to matter little for our purposes since few of the simple burgesses and the unregistered persons were trading on a substantial scale. It is possible that small consignments by these people were tolerated in the same way as cargoes belonging to a ship's company.[2] The scale of such ventures was insufficient, however, to invalidate the statement that the bulk of overseas shipments were owned by burgesses and guild members of Edinburgh.

It is possible to narrow the active trading element even further by suggesting that most foreign trade was undertaken by the merchant guildry of the city. The exceptions to this rule are largely of a geographical nature. Inhabitants of no less than nineteen Scottish burghs were represented in the port books of Leith during the 1620s, the decade for which the most comprehensive records exist. Some came

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1. E.R.B.E. 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), p.115.
2. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.84.

from within a twenty mile radius of Edinburgh, from small burghs such as Linlithgow, Haddington, Musselburgh and Prestonpans, but many came from places some distance from the capital - Dumfries and Ayr, Dundee and Montrose, Banff and Aberdeen and in particular, Glasgow. Merchants of that city owned cargoes aboard one in eight of the ships entering and leaving Leith in the 1620s, mostly those trading to and from the Low Countries. These were the sorts of men who, in the latter half of the century, developed a thriving trade out of the unfree east coast ports such as Bo'ness on the Forth estuary, but who at this juncture seemed content to join with Edinburgh men in freighting ships to and from Leith.[1]

Another group of non-Edinburgh traders consisted of the foreign skippers whose vessels played such a large part in the trade of Leith, at least in the first half of the seventeenth century. These foreign traders can be divided into two groups, those who were the skipper/owners of small vessels importing full cargoes of goods largely on their own account, and those who merely captained a larger carrying vessel and imported some small consignment themselves, almost as though it was an afterthought once the main cargoes had been loaded. The majority of the skipper/owners were Dutchmen and they were particularly prominent as importers of grain during the 1622-3 famine. The strange foreign names of these skippers caused endless spelling problems for the customs clerks. Thus the master of the Keeling of Campvere was noted differently on three occasions as Cornelius Lowis, Laurence and Lowris, and the master of the Sampson of Campvere appeared most frequently as Geillis (a woman's name!) Dame or

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1. Ibid., p.138-9 and p.146.

sometimes Dominus or David according to the clerk of the day. He turned up in the burgh records as Gilleis Dame in March 1621, accused of selling goods before they were entered in the town's books, and was fined 20 merks.[1] This obviously failed to alter his trading habits because his vessel paid five visits to Leith in 1622 and a further six in 1623, and on most of these occasions he was the sole importer. Apart from numerous Dutch vessels, an occasional timber ship arrived from Norway with a cargo owned solely by the skipper, or an English ship such as the Dragon of Lyn which entered Leith in July 1622 with a cargo of malt and rye and eighteen small pieces of leather in the name of John Bride the master. It is interesting to note that few skippers of the large Dutch vessels which arrived from the Baltic ports in the second half of every shipping year brought any goods to sell. Space was obviously at a premium when twenty-five or thirty Scottish merchants were intent on importing goods on these larger ships.

The role of the foreign trader is less clear for the remainder of the century. The records of shipping movements for the 1640s contain no details of traders or cargoes and direct comparisons with the 1620s are therefore impossible. All that can be said with certainty is that fewer foreign vessels came to Leith in this period but that they may still have accounted for about one-third of the shipping entries. The customs records of the 1660s and 1670s clearly demonstrate the continued presence of foreign shipping but its importance was largely a consequence of the Dutch wars. In the intervening years of peace, the number of foreign vessels declined to the point where ships from

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1. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.220.

Europe were considered a rarity.[1] The role of the foreign skipper in Edinburgh's trade was not only small but diminishing.

Although trips by foreign skipper/owners were relatively common in the 1620s (around eighty voyages were recorded in 1622 and 1623 together), it was very rare to encounter a ship chartered by foreign merchants to sail to Scotland. One of the few examples was the Gift of God which sailed from Treport in northern France in the spring of 1622 with a cargo of barley bear "which extends in Scotts measure to 100 bolls bear", on the account of Francis Levalche, Frenchman.[2]

Not all those who engaged in trade were men. A further exception to the merchant guildry rule is furnished by the dozen or more women who traded regularly to and from Leith in the 1620s, some designated as "the relict of - ", others under their own name. None of them appeared to be burgesses in their own right, although this should have been possible under burgh law, but many wives of merchant burgesses are known to have been actively involved in their husbands' commercial affairs.[3] It seems likely, however, that all of those encountered in the records were widows who carried on the family business after their husbands' deaths, and that those listed as 'relicts' were merely those most recently bereaved. A case in point is the relict of Bartilmo Fleming who imported 200 lbs. of 'anetseeds' in August 1622 and the following month took delivery of a mixed cargo of dyes, spices, sugar and hemp, in partnership with John Stevenson, 'her servant'. The records show that poor Bartilmo himself was still running the business only five months earlier when he received a

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.54.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st. series, E71/29/7
3. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.154.

consignment of 11 cwt. of hops from Campvere aboard the Mary of Leith. The fact that all of these women continued to trade abroad suggests that burgess-ship and guildry applied equally to a man and his spouse. Certainly no woman was debarred from trading on the technicality that she personally was not a burgess of the city. When Geillis Halliburton, the relict of John Archibald, merchant of Edinburgh, died in 1623, the inventory of her goods began - "in her merchant booth".[1] Janet Porteous traded on her own for at least thirteen years before she died in 1635. Her husband had been a timber merchant and she continued to specialise in this field, importing eight consignments of Norwegian wood over the period 1621-3. Margaret Monteir operated in partnership with James Craw in the late 1620s which involved despatching at least thirty-five consignments of yarn, mostly to London, over a two year period. A measure of equal opportunity between the sexes would seem to have been a feature of the seventeenth-century burgess community.

Finally, there were a few craftsmen guild members who participated in foreign trade. Although craftsmen had been entitled to join the guild after 1583 (and it has been shown in a previous chapter that up to 25% of craftsmen burgesses were also guild brethren), few apparently did so in order to enjoy the privilege of trading abroad and it is doubtful whether many had the financial resources to embark on such ventures. Those who did figure in the customs books either dealt in commodities directly related to their craft - for example, 'Jeremias the litster' is recorded as the

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1. S.R.O., Commissary Court Records, Register of Edinburgh Testaments, CC8/8/52.

importer of three poks of woad and 60 lb. of indigo in April 1622 - or handled such small quantities that they were more likely to have been for personal consumption than for retail.[1] It must be concluded that, apart from the categories mentioned above, the names which occurred regularly in the overseas customs records were those of Edinburgh merchants, burgesses and guild members of the city.

Previous chapters, however, have indicated the range of wealth and business activity which could be represented by the word 'merchant', from the commercial magnate to the stall-holder. The profits to be made from a mercantile career ranged from the vast wealth (by Scottish standards) of men such as William Dick or William Gray, who amassed five-figure fortunes, admittedly from sources other than trading activities alone, to the absolute poverty of Robert Brown, younger, merchant, who became 'void of employment' and was obliged to release his apprentice, Archibald Carmichael, from his indentures in 1658.[2] The sort of person on whom this chapter is based was more likely to leave an estate in excess of, rather than beneath, £1,000, many probably left over £5,000, some over £10,000 but a few ended their careers in relative poverty or passed through stages of adversity or insolvency. The 'average' overseas trader is as nebulous a concept as the 'average' merchant in general. Many of those who figured in the overseas customs records were neither ostentatiously rich nor chronically poor, neither landowners nor slum-

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.128, notes the small scale of many overseas trading transactions which suggests personal rather than commercial purchasing.
2. S.R.O., Register of Edinburgh Testaments, CC8/8/64, and The Register of Apprentices of the City of Edinburgh, 1583-1666 ed. F.J.Grant, (S.R.S. Vol.28, 1906), p.32.

dwellers but general traders whose business activities and wealth depended on both personal and national fortune or misfortune. Individually they made little impact on the life of the city but grouped together, their economic contribution to the community was probably as great as that of the handful of much-vaunted merchant princes.

It is not surprising that so few adventurous traders were to be found when some of the problems are considered. The dangers of foreign trade can hardly be emphasised too strongly. Not without good reason did the export books of the seventeenth century reiterate the phrase 'borne, God willing' no matter what the destination of each departing vessel, and merchants and skippers alike praise God for their good fortune in trading ventures. When David McCall, a prominent and wealthy burgess of Edinburgh, drew up his will in 1639, having been -

> "merciefullie delyverit furth of gritt perrils and daingers both by sea and land", he declared that "in testimonie of His gritt favours, caire and mercie towards me I vowed and promised to the Lord my God to dedicat some portioun of the meanes and substance He bestowed upon me to pious uses".[1]

His legacies to the Kirk and the poor of the burgh exceeded 12,000 merks.

Physical hazards for the seventeenth-century seafarer included shipwreck, inclement weather, piracy, war and the risks of disease in overseas ports, and each of these can be copiously illustrated from a number of local sources. The testament of William Watson, merchant of Edinburgh, stated that he died 'in the pest' on his way home from Danzig in 1602 but normally the Scottish authorities were very alert

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1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), p.225.

to the dangers of introducing plague from abroad.[1] When it was rife in the Low Countries and England in 1635-6, landings without licence from the suspect cities were forbidden by the Privy Council and the city gates were ordered to remain closed.[2] In 1661, the town council called for a special inspection of all ships from the Baltic and the Netherlands "in regard of the great plagues blak and whyte rageing in the respective places".[3] Suspect ships were often ordered to be cleansed, merchants and mariners quarantined and certain types of cargo prohibited, and it was customary for vessels to carry a bill of health stating that all persons on board were "frie of all contagioun of plague or pestilence".[4]

The risks of disease, however, were probably no greater for the foreign traveller than for the average town dweller in the seventeenth century, whereas the dangers to life and property from a combination of piracy and war were a constant threat to merchants and seamen. Merchant ships were easy prey for pirates in spite of efforts by skippers to sail in convoy - the customs records frequently testify to the numbers of Scottish ships which embarked together from the same foreign port and journeyed as a group to Leith. Perhaps the most spectacular and oft-quoted example of seventeenth-century piracy occurred in 1610 when three Leith ships were fitted out by the town council to pursue a pirate crew who had been disrupting east coast trade 'speciallie about this firth'.[5] The successful outcome of

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1. S.R.O., Register of Edinburgh Testaments, CC8/8/37.
2. R.P.C.S., 2nd series, Vol.VI, p.124 and p.247.
3. E.R.B.E., 1655-65, (Edinburgh 1940), p.271.
4. Ibid., p.361, Taylor, op.cit., p.15, E.R.B.E., passim. Aberdeen magistrates forbade the imports of apples, onions, hards and lints "thei being geir maist infective and dangerous".
5. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.63.

this venture was the capture of the ship and thirty-six pirates, most of whom were later hanged at Leith. However, it proved more difficult to deal with the privateers of Dunkirk, who wreaked havoc on merchant shipping over a lengthy period of the late sixteenth and early seventeen centuries. There are references to their exploits as early as the 1570s while James VI was asked to take action on behalf of the merchants of Scotland after an incident involving a Scottish ship and two privateers fifty years later, in 1624.[1] The request was obviously to no avail because in November 1626, the Gift of God of Leith set sail for France, only to be intercepted in a similar fashion. Her cargo of salmon, hides, goatskins and cloth, pertaining to thirteen merchants of Edinburgh and one of Aberdeen, was "all taken be ye Dunkirkers" according to the customs records, and as a result the export duties already paid by the merchants were refunded to them.[2] James Downie's ship, heading for Calais in March 1627, was also attacked and the cargo of sheepskins and hides taken, but thereafter sailings to France were suspended until 1629 because of the war. When trade resumed, so did the piracy. Three ships of Leith were lost to the Dunkirkers in the spring of 1632 alone, one scarcely two miles off the English coast near Scarborough.[3]

Financial loss, however, paled into insignificance when compared with the fate of those ships' companies captured by the Turks. Eleven mariners of Leith were imprisoned by them in 1615 and the problem was

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1. T. Pagan, The Convention of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, (Glasgow 1926), p.158 and P. Hume Brown, Scotland before 1700 from Contemporary Documents, (Edinburgh 1893), pp. 283-4.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series., E71/29/9.
3. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), pp.104-7.

still a real one more than half a century later.[1] The Isobel of Montrose was taken by 'ane Algiers man of war' in September 1677 and a collection organised by Edinburgh town council toward the relief of the eight remaining seamen raised £900 Scots in ransom money.[2] The same fate befell the Anna of Pittenweem the following year and the fourteen crewmen and passengers on board were -

> "detained and imprisoned and most inhumainly and barbarously used as slaves in a most sad and miserable maner under the tirany and slaverie of these infidells."[3]

Complaints about North African pirates and Dunkirkers were also common in the Exeter records of the 1620s and 1630s.[4]

The many wars of the seventeenth century constituted yet another hazard to merchant shipping. Convoy ships were sometimes appointed to protect them but these would appear to have been insufficient in number to meet the demand, resulting in great delays in the turn-round time of vessels.[5] Foreigners were sometimes employed in this task - a Dutch convoy ship assisted the homeward passage of the Scots conservator at Campvere in 1648 and the captain was granted the freedom of Edinburgh for his troubles. Not all ships were able to obtain such protection. The Alexander of Bo'ness, owned by two Edinburgh merchants, was captured by an Irish frigate from Wexford in 1647 and the ship and its cargo were seized as prizes.[6] In July 1652, during the first Dutch war, James Durie, merchant of Edinburgh, bound for Amsterdam with a cargo of Spanish wool, had his ship taken

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1. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931) p.135.
2. E.R.B.E., 1665-80, (Edinburgh 1950) p.342.
3. Ibid., p.366.
4. W.B. Stephens, Seventeenth-Century Exeter, (Exeter 1958), pp.16-17.
5. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938) p.127.
6. Ibid., p.147 and p.126.

by an English vessel - it was a legitimate prize of war because it was intending to trade at an enemy port. The value placed on ship and cargo, 2000 pieces of eight, was said to be the greatest part of his stock and the agent interceding on his behalf for the return of the vessel added poignantly that Durie was "ane old man of thriescore sex yeiris haveing a charge of seven motherless children."[1] (He was not a poor man, however, if his testament dated 1656 is to be believed. In addition to shares in three ships, he held stock of nearly £4000 Scots in cash.)[2]

Not all periods of war operated to the disadvantage of the Scots. Recent research has suggested that over one hundred vessels were captured during the second Dutch war by about twenty Scottish privateers and that these vessels more than compensated for the losses supposedly sustained in the Civil War and early Cromwellian periods.[3] It has also been shown that Scotland was able to employ her merchant fleet as neutral carriers during the European wars of the 1670s.[4] Nevertheless, such bonuses probably counted for little when set against the disruptions of both the earlier and later years of the century. Wars were not conducive to the smooth running of a merchant's business and hardly a decade of the seventeenth century went by without Scotland becoming embroiled in some conflict. Wars interrupted normal trading patterns, leading, for example, to the complete cessation of trade to France and Spain in the late 1620s and to the transfer of Dutch trade to Flanders during the three Dutch wars

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1. Ibid., p.291.
2. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/68.
3. E. Graham, "The Scottish Marine during the Dutch Wars," S.H.R., 1982, P.69 and Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.240.
4. Smout, ibid., p.71.

of the second half of the century. They caused considerable reductions in the volume of overseas transactions and led to greater uncertainties and higher risks than those which already conspired to defeat the hopeful young merchant recruit and militated against profitable trade for the nation as a whole.

The dangers of piracy and war waxed and waned over the years but the dangers from shipwreck and bad weather were ever-present, and it would appear that such loss could not be covered by insurance, a service unknown in Scotland until the last twenty years of the century.[1] George Langland's ship, the St. Peter, sailed from Leith in November 1626 but "was driven back be stress of weather" and the goods had to be shipped to the Hope Well.[2] When the Mary Katharine of Dysart was blown from her moorings in a storm and damaged both herself and the west bulwark of Leith in 1643, the council sympathised sufficiently with the skipper's misfortune to modify their charges to 500 merks towards the repairs.[3] Scottish ships were not the only ones to suffer. There is the case of the Dunkirk ship driven aground by storms near Leith in 1623, and a Dutch ship from Enkhuizen wrecked on the island of Unst in 1628, both of which were further subjected to plundering and looting by the local people.[4] Similar incidents no doubt occurred to Scottish ships and crews stranded on foreign shores. Loss of life was not uncommon - the George of Leith was cast away at Bamburgh Castle in 1635 "with the haill mariners" and George Tod's ship was lost "he and all his companie with a quantitie of brandie" on

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1. Ibid., p.59.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series, E71/29/9.
3. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.25.
4. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.243 and R.P.C.S., 2nd series, Vol.II, p.124.

the way from Ostend in 1691.[1] The list of ships lost by the burgh of Kirkcaldy in the years around 1690 and recorded for the commissioners of the national survey in 1692 makes depressing reading - some were wrecked, some captured and one "went from this place in October 1690 with ane stock of money to load at Norway and neither men nor ship heard of since".[2] To judge from the wrecks mentioned in the Edinburgh burgh records, the Northumberland and Biscay coasts appeared to claim more than their fair share of ships but the evidence collected in support of a light on May Island indicates that perils existed even within the Firth of Forth itself.[3]

Shipwreck may have caused fatalities and total loss of vessels and cargoes but lesser damage must also have exacted a considerable toll both in terms of shipping laid up and actual cost to shipowners, not to mention the time and money spent on repairs to the harbour facilities. There are numerous examples of damage to the pier at Leith, some as a result of bad weather but many more because of bad navigation, as in the case of a prize ship in 1673, which "at her coming in to the harbour had dung down the east key of the pier and had done great damage."[4] The council intended to arrest the ship for payment if necessary, and it therefore seems surprising that they took such a tolerant view of the Sun of Bergen which damaged the pier in 1664 through bad navigation by the 'pilot' who had been engaged by

1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), p.162 and Register containing the State and Condition of Every Burgh Within the Kingdom of Scotland in the Year 1692, hereafter Register of Every Burgh in Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society, (Edinburgh 1881), p.84.
2. Ibid., pp.84-5.
3. R.P.C.S., 2nd series, Vol.VI, pp.562-79.
4. E.R.B.E., 1665-80, (Edinburgh 1950), p.144.

the master of the vessel contrary to the advice of the Pilotmaster of Leith. The master and 'pilot' were held to be responsible for the damage but because the skipper was a stranger, the Council reduced the sum for damages from £400 to £200 Scots, adding that "if the same be not pleasantlie and readilie payet the whole will be requyred".[1]

There were other potential hazards to be faced with wooden ships in a confined area, a fact recognised by the burgh council. In September 1613, the council recorded that -

> "in consideratioun of the daynger that hes fallen furth of laitt at thair port and heaven of Leith threw heiting of pik (pitch) within the ships, thairfore statutes and ordainis that na pik pots be heit within ships bot upon the schore allanerlie."[2]

The carelessness of crews in harbour was further indicated by a council act of 1643 forbidding any kind of fire or light on any ship within the harbour.[3] While there are no direct references to accidents caused either by pitch pots, fires or lights, the damage which might have been caused in such an event could easily be imagined.

These were only the physical risks associated with foreign trade. There were also the commercial and financial risks attached to freighting a vessel and sending it overseas, such as damage to the cargo and problems of buying and selling under conditions where market knowledge was far from perfect. It is little wonder that many Scottish merchants stuck to tried and tested routes and commodities where the hazards were known, rather than venture into some new field.

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1. E.R.B.E., 1655-65, (Edinburgh 1940), pp.347-50.
2. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.105.
3. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.35.

It would seem appropriate at this point to consider briefly the state of Scottish trade as a whole during the seventeenth century. Scotland's horizons were very limited in the earlier years and regular commercial transactions were virtually confined to a handful of European countries - France, the Netherlands, England, Scandinavia, and the Baltic seaboard, to which only America could be added by the end of the period. To these places, Scotland exported largely primary products and from them she received a wide variety of manufactured goods together with those primary products which were not available at home. Exports can be grouped under five headings:- firstly, animal products such as skins, hides, wool, and closely related to these, fish; secondly, vegetable products which usually meant wheat and bear; thirdly, mineral products, particularly coal; fourthly, semi-manufactured items such as salt and yarn and finally, a small range of manufactures from gloves and stockings to plaiding and linen cloth. In general, most of the products were sent in varying quantities to most of the countries. Thus while fish was probably Scotland's major export to France, skins, wool, cloth and coal were frequently part of any French-bound cargo, and while skins dominated the export trade to the Baltic, cloth, salt, coal and fish were also carried.

Turning to imports, Scotland's needs were many and varied. Timber, flax, iron and tar from Scandinavia and the Baltic, dyes and spices from the Netherlands and wine and salt from France, vied with large amounts of cloth and haberdashery from England and such a quantity and variety of craftwork from different sources that one begins to wonder if Scotland possessed any artisans at all. Fruit and exotic groceries are mentioned frequently, grain only in times of harvest failure when domestic supplies were insufficient, while the

range of manufactures serves to demonstrate Scotland's reliance on foreign trade and its importance in her economic well-being. There are remarkable similarities between the beginning and the end of our period. The intervening years had failed to widen Scotland's commercial sphere or to significantly expand the list of products in which she dealt, although tastes in the capital city had become more sophisticated with the passage of time. A trader from the reign of James V would have felt equally at home in the reign of James VII.[1]

Focussing attention on burgh rather than nation, a wide variety of questions can be posed in a discussion of local trade, many of which relate to the ships and shippers involved. It would be useful to know, for example, how far Edinburgh merchants were engaged in the trade and shipping of other local ports, how many ships were registered at Leith throughout the seventeenth century, who owned them, and something about their size and value.

It has been difficult to estimate how many ships belonged to Edinburgh and its port for much of the century because of a lack of official sources. Although a list was apparently drawn up in 1626 which would have furnished details of the number of ships belonging to each burgh in Scotland, no record remains save the return for the burgh of Aberdeen.[2] Tucker's report of 1656, suggesting only twelve or fourteen vessels belonging to Leith was written at a time when the trade of south-east Scotland was depressed as a result of the 'intestine troubles' and 'domestick comotions', and Edinburgh in particular was suffering from the financial burdens of Cromwellian

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.27.
2. R.P.C.S., 2nd series, Vol.1, p.669.

rule.[1] The only benchmark for the post-Restoration period is contained in a list of Leith ships compiled in 1692 as part of a national survey of the economic fortunes of the burghs, which gives a total of twenty-nine vessels altogether, ranging in size from 150 tons to 12 tons.[2] However, since some of the information from this source has been criticised as inaccurate and misleading, presenting too gloomy a picture of many burghs' affairs, doubt exists about the accuracy of the above figures and it seems likely that they have been underestimated.[3]

In the absence of other material, the customs records remain as the sole available source and then only for certain years of the 1620s, 1660s and 1670s. Unfortunately, those for the 1660s and early 1670s are not sufficiently explicit to permit any estimate of Leith shipping to be made but the earlier records are most informative. It would appear from the port books of the 1620s that a minimum of forty ships were based at Leith and from separate accounts kept in the 1640s, that the number was very similar. These figures refer only to the vessels involved in longer sea-going voyages to England and to Europe, and do not include any which might have been employed solely in the coasting trade. Given the supposed upturn in the economy in the years after 1660 and especially in the decade of the 1670s, together with the acquisition of foreign vessels during the second Dutch war already referred to, it seems unlikely that the number of vessels could have fallen from forty to twenty-nine by the end of the

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1. Thomas Tucker, "Report upon the Settlement of the Revenues of Excise and Customs in Scotland, A.D.1656" in Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society, pp.21-22.
2. Register of Every Burgh, p.56.
3. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.254.

century.[1] If we accept Smout's figure of around two hundred Scottish vessels sailing overseas for the last third of the seventeenth century, then Leith alone provided about 20% of the nation's stock of ships.[2]

These figures, however, do not give a true reflection of Edinburgh's trading potential as her merchants frequently purchased ships belonging to other local ports. When Walter Rankin, a merchant burgess of the city, died in 1645, he had shares in nine different vessels, not one of which was registered in Leith - three belonged to Queensferry and one each to Bo'ness, Pittenweem, Kirkcaldy, Prestonpans, Culross and Burntisland. While the ownership of so many non-Leith vessels was probably exceptional, some involvement of Edinburgh merchants in local shipping was common enough. David Jonkin, a prominent burgess, had shares in ships of Queensferry and Dysart as well as Leith; Andrew Ainslie's will of 1648 records shares in ships of Dysart and Burntisland; Hector Purves was part-owner of a ship from as far away as Dundee, and when the burgh of Pittenweem made its return to the commissioners in 1692, it stated that all except one-sixteenth part of its vessels, which were owned by their skippers, pertained to and were employed by the merchants of Edinburgh.[3] It would even appear that George Suittie owned one-eighth of a vessel of Campvere in the 1620s, although ownership of foreign vessels was probably unusual.[4] The figure of forty ships given earlier should therefore be seen as the minimum number of vessels owned by the

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1. Graham, op.cit., p.69.
2. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', pp.53-54.
3. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/61, CC8/8/60, CC8/8/63, CC8/8/58 and Register of Every Burgh, p.111.
4. S.R.O., Register of Testaments CC8/8/54.

Edinburgh burgess community.

In addition to those local vessels which were actually owned by Edinburgh men, an even greater number were usually chartered by them. Almost one hundred different Scottish ships have been noted as entering Leith with cargoes for city merchants in both the 1620s and the 1640s, and about a third of that number could be called regular visitors. There are instances of ships of Orkney, Shetland, Fraserburgh, Arbroath, Montrose, Aberdeen and Dundee on charter to Edinburgh merchants but these are the exceptions. (It was not uncommon, however, for merchants from these and other distant burghs to import goods in Leith-bound ships). Nearly all the ships which imported goods to Leith came from local ports, either from burghs such as Prestonpans, Queensferry and Bo'ness along the southern shore of the Forth or from the Fife burghs along the northern shore, stretching from Culross in the west to St. Andrews in the north-east. The following tables provide a breakdown of Scottish ships for the available years.

TABLE 5.1 ENTRIES OF SCOTTISH SHIPS TO LEITH BY HOME PORT (%)

	1621-22	1622-23	1640-41	1643-44
Leith ships	52	43	45	56
Fife ships	34	39	33	29
Forth ports ships	12	14	20	8
Others	1	4	2	8

Source:- S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series and E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

The actual number of entries and their variability will receive comment in a later chapter; for the present, it is the percentage share of trade which is of interest. It would appear from the above

that almost half of the Scottish ships arriving at Leith were registered there and a further third had home ports in Fife. Of the latter, ten of which traded regularly to Leith, Kirkcaldy, Burntisland, Pittenweem and Anstruther are particularly well represented and these four, together with the Forth ports of Prestonpans and Queensferry, account for between two-thirds and three-quarters of non-Leith vessels in every year. It is less likely that this pattern continued in the post-Restoration period. The Fife burghs may have reached the peak years of their maritime history in the early 1640s, to suffer considerable decline in the decade to follow and a steady loss of importance as the century proceeded.[1] Only Kirkcaldy managed to sustain its place in the burghs' tax roll and it alone admitted to numerous ships in the 1692 returns.[2] As for the Forth ports, they became overshadowed by the growth of Bo'ness after 1660. Its comparative obscurity during the earlier years and the fact that few of its vessels figured in the Leith records of the 1620s suggests that its rise to prominence was a phenomenon of the second half of the century. On the other hand, it may simply reflect the fact that Bo'ness was infinitely more important as an outlet for west-coast merchants than as an additional port for east-coast traders.

We can conclude from the tables that ships tended to concentrate on the trade of their own and neighbouring ports, a finding which concurs with that of Professor Lythe some years ago.[3] But it will

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1. S.G.E. Lythe, "Scottish Trade with the Baltic 1550-1650" in J.K. Eastham (ed) Dundee Economic Essays (1955), p.69 and Register of Every Burgh, passim.
2. Ibid., pp.83-4.
3. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.130.

be shown later that a far greater proportion of Leith's trade was handled by foreign vessels, as one might expect, than was the case for other Scottish ports.

It is seldom easy to determine the ownership of vessels. The customs books record only the name of the ship's master and the merchants whose goods were being carried on each separate voyage. They fail to state whether any of these men had shares in the vessel because such information was irrelevant for customs purposes. While partnerships were often formed with regard to the cargo, this does not imply partnerships in the vessels involved, although this may have been the case in a few instances. Occasionally, uniform cargoes such as salt are referred to tantalisingly as belonging to the master and owners of the ship without naming them. For general cargoes, it does not appear that merchants habitually used their own ships.

Sources such as the Council Records sometimes contain references to ships and their owners, usually as a result of misfortune which had befallen the vessel and crew. Five Edinburgh burgesses including Andrew Ainslie and William Dick are listed as the owners of a ship wrecked off the Northumberland coast in 1626, and in 1642 the Barbara of Leith, "taken by ane Biscayner man of war as ane Hollands' ship in respect of her fabrick", was stated to be the property of Archibald Tod and twelve other merchants.[1] References such as these, however, are not very common and in most cases, the names of the merchants are those of the owners of the cargoes, not the owners of the vessels.

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1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41 (Edinburgh 1935), p.14 and E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.12.

The most informative sources regarding shipowners are the testaments of merchants to be found in the Commissary Court records. Even these are of limited value because of the normal practice of dividing a vessel into shares, usually quarters, eighths or sixteenths, in order to minimise both cost and risk. Thus while it is interesting to note that David Jonkin owned three-eighths of a ship called the David of Queensferry and one-quarter of the Bruce, we are left wondering who and how many owned the remaining shares. Occasionally, a vessel might be wholly owned by one trader but it seems likely that in these cases, the ship was small. William Salmond, a merchant of Edinburgh, was the sole owner of the John of Leith and had shares in three other vessels, according to his testament of 1646, but the value of the John at 800 merks was no more than his one-sixteenth share in the Good Fortune of Leith.[1] It seems probable that the John of Leith mentioned in the shipping movements of 1643-44 was the same vessel and since it carried cargoes of only 12 tons and 20 tons that year, it would appear to have been a small ship. David Murray, who died in 1642, was the sole owner of a bark called the Falcon of Leith, valued at £720 Scots, and this may have been the same vessel used by him in the early 1620s on a regular run between Calais and Leith.[2] No other ship of that name appears in the records and there are many instances of ships still in service after twenty years. If this was the same vessel, then judging by the cargoes it cannot have been large. Murray, incidentally, is one of the few examples encountered of a merchant who regularly used his own

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1. S.R.O. Register of Testaments CC8/8/61.
2. S.R.O. Register of Testaments CC8/8/60 and Leith Customs Books, 1st series, E71/29/7.

vessel, although not to the exclusion of others.

It would be true to say that most shipowners were merchants but there are some exceptions, principally the skippers of the ships. The appearance in the records of the foreign skipper/owner has already been noted and his Scottish counterpart has been reckoned "fairly common in mercantile circles" in the seventeenth century.[1] It would be unrepresentative of the class as a whole, however, to suggest that all or most skippers had shares in the vessels they captained. While there are examples such as David Wilson of Queensferry who not only possessed a one-sixth share of his own vessel the Margaret, but a further one-sixth of the Comfort of Queensferry, there are as many skippers who held no shares at all.[2] Another exception to the merchant shipowner is the craftsman owner, probably a rare figure in the capital city but perhaps more common in the smaller burghs where craftsmen burgesses may have achieved positions of greater power, wealth and status. The only known reference to a craftsman shipowner in Edinburgh concerned David Fluker, a baxter in Leith, who was ordered to remove his wrecked ship from the harbour in 1614, as it constituted a nuisance to other shipping.[3] The strangest case of shipowning, however, must have been that of Mr. Alexander Henderson, a minister of the burgh who died in 1646, leaving an estate of £28,000 Scots, including part of a ship.[4]

In the final analysis, however, trying to match part-shares in vessels with their merchant owners is reminiscent of a jigsaw puzzle

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.126.
2. S.R.O. Register of Testaments CC8/8/53.
3. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.116.
4. S.R.O. Register of Testaments CC8/8/62.

and the detective work which would be required in order to catalogue the ships of Leith throughout the century cannot be justified either in time spent or rewards gained. Generalisations will therefore have to suffice. It would appear that most merchants who traded regularly overseas were in some way involved in the ownership of vessels. Sometimes, it would be only one-sixteenth part of a ship, in other cases up to ten part-shares in different vessels, occasionally a wholly-owned vessel of small size, but any substantial merchant would normally have shares in several ships. There is little evidence that merchants frequently used their own ships and because of the complexities of part-sharing, it has been impossible to find out whether co-owners were usually business partners alone or linked by ties of blood or marriage.

What of the ships themselves? Sources on seventeenth-century Scottish trade agree that most were small, cheap to buy and frequently built abroad, usually in the Netherlands.[1] Their size reflected the inadequacy of both Scottish harbours and Scottish commerce - there was no necessity to operate larger vessels. Little has been discovered about the origins of the ships which featured in the Leith customs records, although the luckless Barbara, referred to earlier, had been built in the Netherlands (hence her capture), and the Archangel of Leith was bought in Amsterdam in 1620 by a group of seven merchants.[2] An item in the Council Records, however, perhaps suggests that few vessels were built locally. In 1671, it was decided

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.176 and Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.49.
2. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.12 and E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.231.

to exempt from payment of the 'merk per tun' all ships built at Leith since 1660 or those which might be built in the future so that -

> "trade may not only flourish at the said port of Leith but also that merchants of this burgh may be incited to build ships and vessels there and that skippers and masters of ships may be encouraged to reside and dwell at Leith".[1]

This hardly seems to indicate a thriving shipbuilding industry. Furthermore, when James Sympson, skipper, and several merchants informed the council in 1678 that they intended to build a ship of 300 tons, armed with 40 guns, at Leith, the records stated that "the lyke ship as to hir burding and number of gunes has not been built in Scotland these many years bygone".[2]

There are other scattered references to local shipbuilding throughout the century but the impression given by the burgh council, at least before 1660, was that they regarded it as a necessary evil rather than a positive advantage. Their overriding concern with enforcing council regulations, typical of the small-mindedness of seventeenth-century administrations, can have done little to foster local enterprise. In 1643, the council complained of encroachments on town land by inhabitants of Leith who "cast docks and use the same at their pleasure without any licence or acknowledgement of the counsell".[3] In 1657, a committee was appointed to go to Leith to "visite the bounds quhairupon William Cowstoun is building a shipp and to try be what right he possesses the dock within the sea flood quhilk properlie perteins to the Toun".[4] Even the attendance of the burgh treasurer and members of the council at the launching of Edward

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1. E.R.B.E., 1665-80, (Edinburgh 1950), p.105.
2. Ibid., p.340.
3. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.32.
4. E.R.B.E., 1655-65, (Edinburgh 1940), p.63.

McMath's ship in 1611 was principally to ensure that the dock was properly repaired.[1] The pettiness of burghal administration may have further discouraged local shipbuilders, already hampered by a lack of material and skilled craftsmen, and by the competitiveness of overseas shipyards.[2]

The outlook of the city fathers appears to have undergone some change after 1660. The council act of 1671 was one attempt to encourage both trade and shipbuilding. It was followed by another in 1682 exempting all Norwegian timber required by shipbuilders from payment of the Merk per Tun and per Pack, a local tax levied on all imports to Edinburgh and Leith, by land and sea. Nevertheless, attempts to encourage the industry seem to have met with little success throughout Scotland; while it was possible to build a few ships locally, cheaper, standardised vessels could more readily be obtained in the Netherlands or Norway, and a proposal to standardise Scottish-built ships and relate them to the needs of the economy in the 1680s came to nought.[3]

Recent evidence, however, has suggested that Scotland had reached a position of virtual self-sufficiency by this period.[4] It is said that the improved technology acquired as a result of capturing large numbers of prize ships during the second Dutch war was instrumental in allowing a ban to be imposed on the purchase of foreign-built vessels in 1682. It is certainly true that this was a recommendation of the Privy Council Committee of Trade which met that year, but the same

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1. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.73.
2. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', pp.48-9.
3. R.P.C.S., 3rd series, Vol.V11, p.671.
4. Graham, op.cit., p.71.

committee had noted that Scotland currently possessed twice as much shipping as could be employed in trade.[1] Therefore, while access to Dutch techniques might theoretically have benefitted Scottish shipbuilders, the superabundance of ships already in service gave little scope for further production. Under these circumstances, it would have seemed sensible to place restrictions on the purchase of foreign vessels and the use of foreign carriers, and if this in turn had helped indirectly to foster native shipbuilding, so much the better. Competition from Dutch vessels was not confined to Scotland, however. There is evidence to suggest that the once thriving shipbuilding industry of Ipswich declined partly as a result of the great number of Dutch ships captured as prizes.[2] It certainly seems unlikely that the ban on foreign-built vessels resulted from a sudden improvement in Scotland's shipbuilding industry, and any stimulus would appear to have been temporary, if criticisms around 1700 are to be believed.[3]

Vessels could be built more cheaply abroad, but how much was 'cheap'? It has been estimated that an ordinary Scottish trading vessel in the second half of the century may have cost anything between £1200 and £8000 Scots, many at the lower end of the scale, and this statement would appear to hold good for the first fifty years.[4] A random sample of vessels recorded in Edinburgh testaments over the period 1610-46 gave the following results:-

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1. R.P.C.S., 3rd series, Vol.Vll, p.665.
2. D.Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, Vol.1. (1927 edition, London), p.41.
3. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', pp.48-9.
4. Ibid., p.50.

TABLE 5.2 NUMBER AND VALUE OF SHIPS 1610-46

Ship Value (£ Scots)	No. of Ships
Less than 2000	14
2001 - 4000	28
4001 - 6000	19
6001 - 8000	11
8001 - 10000	4
10000 and over	4
	80

Source:- S.R.O., Register of Testaments, passim.

From these figures, the average vessel cost just under £4,500 Scots and the most expensive, £12,800. These values are in fact substantially higher than those quoted for ships of Edinburgh in the national survey of 1692, in which only 10% of vessels exceeded £6,000, and almost 40% were valued at under £1,000.[1] This could be taken as further proof of the decay of trade in the late 1680s and early 1690s or additional evidence of the unreliability of the survey which is already thought to have understated the number of Edinburgh's ships. The valuations placed on vessels took several factors into account, notably their size and age, and a vessel of low value might have been small, or old, or both. It is possible that the capital city's merchant fleet was an ageing one in 1692. An illustration of value diminishing with age is provided by David Jonkin's ship, the Bruce. He held a quarter share in the vessel, which was valued at £700 Scots according to his wife's testament of 1626, but when he died in 1643, the same share had fallen to only £300 Scots. If the vessel had seen more than twenty years service, it would undoubtedly have been considered old and its later valuation reflects this. New ships

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1. Register of Every Burgh, p.56.

obviously maintained their value for some time; the Archangel of Leith was divided into one-eighth shares worth 1000 merks each and they retained this value at least until 1632, when David Peebles, one of the co-owners, died, listing his 1000 merk share in the inventory of his goods.[1]

A ship's value, however was probably based largely on size and since it has already been noted that ship values altered little over the hundred-year period, it seems likely that the size of ships also remained very similar. Various estimates have been made of the carrying capacity of the average Scottish vessel in the seventeenth century. A cargo weight of 50-60 tons, has been suggested for the normal sea-going ship in the second half of the century, and the twenty-nine vessels listed as belonging to Edinburgh in the 1692 survey had an average weight of almost 60 tons (which makes it all the more remarkable that their average value was so low.)[2] For a slightly earlier period, an average cargo was reckoned to be 40 tons while anything above 60 tons was considered uncommon, and a neglected source of local shipping information for the 1640s also suggests, at first glance, an average cargo of around 50 tons.[3]

There are, nevertheless, considerable difficulties to be overcome in assessing the size of seventeenth-century vessels. The first concerns measurement. Assuming that any figure relating to size is mentioned, (and it is very unusual for customs records and similar sources to provide this information), it will undoubtedly be given in

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1. S.R.O., Register of Testaments, CC8/8/53, CC8/8/56, CC8/8/61.
2. Register of Every Burgh, p.56 and Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.51.
3. Taylor, op.cit., p.11 and E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

'tons burden', the standard seventeenth-century measure. This has either to be translated into its modern equivalent, gross tonnage, or the problem avoided altogether by thinking of ships in terms of their cargo capacity instead of their overall size. Tons burden or deadweight tonnage can be reckoned as the number of tons which may be loaded into an empty ship, and the use of this rule makes it unnecessary to hazard a guess at the actual size of a ship.[1] The problem of measurement does not end here. Not only do official records fail to state the total weight of the ship, few give any indication of the weight of the cargo. Even assuming that accurate conversions can be effected between bolls, chalders, lasts and other more obscure Scottish measurements, there are barrels, tries and packs to contend with; and what is one to make of shiploads such as 88 barrels of apples and 4 pieces of camrays, or 6 poks of onion seed, 10 barrels of oil, 5 barrels of lint and 1 trie of wares valued at £40 Scots? It is worth remembering that much academic discussion has been centred on the vexed subject of Scottish measurements in recent years.[2]

Although the tonnage of the cargo may be known or can be satisfactorily calculated, what relationship did this have to the size of the ship? There is no way of knowing whether or not ships were fully loaded when they arrived at Leith. It is possible that goods may have been discharged at a previous port of call, or that a ship

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1. R. Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry. (London, 1962), p.178.
2. For example, Taylor, op.cit., p.21 and the review of this book by T.C. Smout in Northern Scotland, Vol.1 (1973), p.236. Also R.E.Zupko,The Weights and Measures of Scotland before the Union, S.H.R., Vol.56, 1977,pp. 119-45 and in the same volume, T.C.Smout & I.Levitt, Some Weights and Measures in Scotland, pp.146-152.

was full but carried a low tonnage of goods because the cargo was bulky but light in weight. What can be stated with reasonable certainty is that vessels aimed to be filled to capacity in order to maximise profits and that wine and salt ships in particular were nearly always fully loaded. Figures from the 1680s have also suggested that English ships were invariably fully loaded whereas those from the Netherlands were often half empty.[1]

Finally, there is the question of the reliability of all official trade figures, a topic of endless discussion to economic historians of the seventeenth and later centuries. For the moment, it is sufficient to recall warnings about the ease and frequency of smuggling at this time and to remember that the customs records were not kept for the benefit of future historians of trade.[2] Cargo weights should perhaps be looked on as approximations rather than factual amounts and all the foregoing difficulties should be constantly borne in mind when considering the size of Scottish vessels and the cargoes they carried.

It has been possible to form some idea of average mid-century cargoes entering Leith from the Accounts of the Merk per Tun and per Pack, which record entries over the period 1636-47. While they contain no details of the goods imported and cannot therefore be compared with the port books, they do supply information about the nationality and point of departure of ships, and unusually, they state cargo weights for each vessel, as the tax was assessed on the tonnage of imports.

Unfortunately, the records are less informative than might

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.188 and p.196.
2. T.C.Smout, 'The Trade of East Lothian at the end of the Seventeenth Century', Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian & Field Naturalist Society, 1963, p.67 & 76 for inaccuracies as a result of smuggling.

at first be imagined, but, given the administrative chaos which must have resulted from years of war, civil unrest and plague, we are perhaps lucky to have them at all. To begin with, they are not an unbroken series; 1643 is missing altogether, 1636 and 1647 are only part years and the figures for 1645 and 1646 have been entered as one continuous list, omitting dates. The lack of standardisation has also led to differences in the details recorded. While all years list the master of the ship, the port from which it sailed and the tax payable, only three of the eight complete years mention the home ports of vessels and three specify the actual tonnage on which tax was to be levied. (There is only one year, 1644, for which all the information is available). Although tonnage of vessels could theoretically be calculated from the tax payable, the standard rate of one merk per tun of goods was not always enforced since "the uptaking of the said impost of all guids indifferentlie may prove too burdenable to the liedges".[1] The three available years have therefore to be taken as representative of the whole.

A complete breakdown of the figures is given in Appendix 5e but the main findings are summarised overleaf. Taking the percentage figures as a whole, it can be shown that 75% of all cargoes weighed less than 60 tons and 60% weighed less than 40 tons. Cargoes from some countries were almost invariably small - 95% of English cargoes, 85% of Dutch cargoes and 80% of Norwegian cargoes weighed less than 40 tons - while others were consistently large - 50% of French salt and 60% of French wine cargoes exceeded 80 tons, together with all the wine cargoes from Spain. None of this seems unexpected if one

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1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935), p.182.

TABLE 5.3 CARGO WEIGHTS OF SHIPS ENTERING LEITH, 1637, 1638, 1644 (PERCENTAGES)

Tonnage	Norway	France			Baltic	Nether/ lands	Sweden	Denmark	England	Spain	Other/ Unknown
		Wine	Salt	Other							
Under 20	28	-	-	55	13	50	7	41	67	-	33
21-40	52	3	10	37	33	33	56	29	27	-	52
41-60	15	10	16	8	33	15	19	18	7	-	10
61-80	4	26	26	-	11	2	15	12	-	-	5
81-100	1	28	32	-	9	-	4	-	-	18	-
101-120	-	17	10	-	1	-	-	-	-	36	-
Over 120	-	15	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	-

Source: E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

considers the distances involved and the goods imported. Voyages to Norway, England and the Low Countries were relatively short and could be more readily undertaken by small vessels than those to the Baltic countries or the Biscay coast, and some of the goods imported, such as cloth and clothing items and even timber, took up large amounts of space in relation to their weight. Ships involved in the wine, salt or Baltic trades were faced with longer distances and heavier commodities and it was obviously more profitable to employ larger vessels on such routes. The initial impression given by these figures however, is that ships trading to Leith in this period could not match the average cargo of 50-60 tons referred to earlier.

It could also be argued that the inclusion of wine ships distorts the true size of the average Scottish vessel and this can be illustrated by the figures below, calculated from the same years as before.

TABLE 5.4 CARGO WEIGHTS OF SHIPS ENTERING LEITH, 1637, 1638, 1644

Tonnages	Total no. of ships	%	Total less/ wine ships	%
Less than 20	144	27	144	34
21-40	164	31	161	38
41-60	80	15	71	17
61-80	51	10	29	7
81-100	44	8	18	4
101-120	23	4	4	1
Over 120	20	4	2	0.5
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	526		429	

Source:- E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

With wine ships removed from the total, almost 90% of the remaining cargoes weighed less than 60 tons and 70% less than 40 tons. The only vessels which exceeded these figures were Baltic traders and those from the salt-producing areas around La Rochelle. On this

basis, the average cargo weight of a sea-going vessel in the first half of the century may have been as low as 35-40 tons, at most 45-50 tons if wine ships are included. This is somewhat less than might have been expected, and lower than the average cargo weights quoted for the closing years of the century. A simple explanation is not immediately obvious since it has already been suggested that the size of the vessels varied little over the period and that Scotland's imports came from virtually the same European sources and in the same proportions at the beginning and the end of the century. (It would not be possible to argue, for example, that more vessels came from the Baltic/Biscay regions and fewer from Norway/England/Low Countries in the 1660s and 1670s, resulting in higher average cargo weights, nor does it seem likely that customs officials were better able to curb smuggling in the later period, thus accounting for larger cargoes). The problem of smuggling really applies to goods off-loaded before they reach a major port and attempts to deceive officials in harbour did not always go undetected. Two examples from a single month of the Leith shore dues in 1639 show that 'errors' were noted. The Janet of Kinghorn, docking at Leith with a cargo of wine from Bordeaux, was found to be carrying 42 tons and not the 38 tons stated by the master, and the God's Gift of Wemyss from Campvere was found to contain 47 tons of goods and not 24.[1] It is also conceivable that there were distortions in the particular years available but there is no way of knowing this.

The weights of cargoes calculated from the years 1637, 1638 and 1644 apply to all the vessels entering Leith, both Scottish and

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1. E.C.A., Shore Dues collected at Leith, 1638-9.

foreign. The figures of 50-60 tons for an average cargo in the second half of the century represent mostly Scottish vessels as few foreigners traded to Scotland in this period, but even those that did were reckoned to be scarcely larger than the average Scottish ship.[1] It was decided to see whether nationality affected the size of vessels for the earlier years, although unfortunately only one year gives details of both home port and cargo size. 118 ships were recorded at Leith in the year 1644 and it was found that roughly one-third were foreign, one-third based at Leith and the remainder at other Scottish ports. Both the foreign and Leith ships carried average cargoes of 40 tons, while the other Scottish ships averaged 60 tons, because a higher proportion of them were wine-carriers. Removing the wine ships as before reduced the average foreign and Scottish vessels to 34 tons of cargo, the Leith vessels to 26 tons. This would seem to confirm that the average foreign vessel was roughly the same size as the average Scottish vessel but obviously a single year's figures are not sufficiently conclusive. There is nothing in these figures, however, to explain the low cargo weights to be found in the 1630s and 1640s.

One of the problems encountered in using shipping records as a crude index of economic activity is that different impressions may be given by using different calculations. This is highlighted by comparing the number of ships trading to Leith with the tonnages they carried.

If the percentage distribution of incoming ships is used as a means of ranking the importance of countries in their trade with

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.52.

Edinburgh, it will be seen that trade with Norway was the most important in terms of numbers, followed by that with the Netherlands, the Baltic states and the Bordeaux region.

TABLE 5.5 SHIPS ENTERING LEITH, 1637, 1638, 1644.

	No. of ships	% of ships	No. of tons	% of tons	Average weight of cargoes(tons)
Norway	98	19	3229	13	33
Bordeaux	86	16	8111	33	94
Rochelle	31	6	2461	10	79
France	38	7	892	4	23
Baltic	70	13	3444	14	49
Netherlands	82	16	2200	9	27
Sweden	27	5	1229	5	46
Denmark	17	3	555	2	33
England	45	8	515	2	11
Spain	11	2	1380	6	125
Other/unknown	21	4	614	2	29
Total	526		24630		47

Source:- E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

If the weight of cargoes is deemed to be more reliable than numbers of vessels as an indication of the amount of trade between European countries and the capital city, then the French wine trade is by far the most important, followed by the Baltic, Norwegian and French salt trades. Fewer ships came to Leith from Spain than from England (only a quarter of the number) but the tonnage they carried was more than twice as great, illustrating how easy it is to be mesmerised by tables of figures which can be made to support very different conclusions.

Once again, we have to decide how reliable the source material is before we can justify using it as the basis for discussion. In the case of the Merk per Tun Accounts, the number of vessels recorded seems unlikely to be subject to much error and because the tax was granted as an extra source of revenue for the town coffers, efforts must have been made to ensure that the maximum benefit was obtained

both in terms of the number of ships and the weight of cargoes. It is possible that the accounts understated the volume of trade because anything which is liable for tax is subject to tax evasion but it could be argued that if the burgh revenues stood to gain by the collection of the tax, then burgh officials would try to ensure that smuggling and deception within the port were kept to a minimum. Detection at Leith has already been noted; there is another interesting item under the discharges of the Aberdeen Shore Work Accounts, the record of a local tax similar to the Merk per Tun, for the period 1621-24 which reads - "Given to the workmen of the schore for intelligence and information of gouds coming in and out at the same - 24s."[1]

If we are satisfied that the accounts are reasonably accurate, then the figures for wine imports are particularly illuminating because they suggest a far higher volume of wine entering Leith in this period than at any other time during the century. For the three available years, the average figure for wine imports was approximately 3,000 tuns, a three-fold increase in tonnage and a two-fold increase in number of ships on figures for both earlier and later years of the century. There are two possible explanations for this state of affairs; either the demand for wine increased considerably towards the middle of the century or the figures which have been accepted for other periods have been underestimated and it is likely that the real explanation involves both these factors. For the first half of the century, our existing knowledge is based on figures extracted from the

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1. Taylor, op.cit., p.117.

Treasurer's Accounts of the burgh of Edinburgh.[1] There are no customs records which give particulars of wine as it was entered in separate wine books, none of which are extant. The Treasurer's Accounts covering the years 1610-25 show that approximately 1,000 tuns of wine annually were declared, taxed and consumed in the burgh, but the amounts of tax recorded are only the figures for that portion which was collected direct from taverners on the volume of wine which they sold on their premises. This is obviously quite a different matter from amounts actually imported at Leith, only a part of which would then be consumed by the drinking population within hostelries.

A further indication that these figures are too low to be realistic is provided by calculating the number of ships which would have been required to import 1,000 tuns of wine. Using Professor Lythe's figures of 45-50 tuns for the average cargo of a typical Scottish wine ship around 1600, this would mean that only about 20 vessels per annum entered Leith with cargoes of wine in the period 1610-25. As Leith was the centre of the Scottish import trade in wine, and the wine trade has always been considered an important branch of Edinburgh commerce, it seems unlikely that the entire year's requirements could be contained in so few ships.[2] Furthermore, it is possible that the average cargo of a typical wine ship has also been underestimated. Figures from the Merk per Tun Accounts suggest that an average wine cargo was probably over 100 tuns, and since it has already been noted that sizes of vessels varied little during the century, it is possible that wine ships entering Leith in the earlier

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1. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.339.
2. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.178.

years of the century were of roughly the same magnitude. The wine fleet, on this basis, would have consisted of only 10-12 vessels.

Figures of wine imports for the second half of the century are equally sparse and low in volume. Approximately 1,300 tuns per annum for the years 1686-88 have been quoted for the whole of Scotland, and if, as suggested, over 60% of this amount came to Leith, this would mean just over 800 tuns a year.[1] This, too, seems an amazingly low figure, although the threat of impending war, which eventually halted the trade altogether, might have reduced the volume of wine in this period.

It also seems plausible that the demand for wine in the late 1630s and early 1640s had reached a peak for the first half of the century. The population of Edinburgh at this time was probably larger than it had been thirty years previously, although this is debatable, but it was undoubtedly swollen by outsiders as a result of the civil unrest. The centre of the city "swarmed with demonstrators, gentlemen and ministers who came up to town to bring petitions or join in the protests..."[2] Doubtless arguments and discussion were thirsty work. Whatever the reason, it would appear that the amount of wine imported to Edinburgh in the first half of the century was far higher than we had suspected.

No other comparisons can be made on a commodity basis because the Merk per Tun Accounts do not specify goods within the total cargo and none of the customs records for other years of the seventeenth century give any indication of tonnage. Our conclusions about the size of

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.285.
2. R. Mitchison, A History of Scotland, (London 1970), p.193.

Scottish trading vessels must be that while an average cargo of 40-60 tons has been accepted as the norm for much of the century, the majority of vessels would be found in the lower part of the range and many carried loads far below this weight. Because of the difficulties of relating cargo to size of ship, it would nevertheless be unwise to deduce from this that the average Scottish sea-going vessel was much smaller than has been previously estimated. Wine ships, however, have to be placed in a category of their own as they were always substantially bigger than other vessels.

The fact that one talks of 'wine ships' indicates a tendency to specialise in that commodity, at least during the short winter season when almost all of the country's wine was imported. The same names appear year after year - the James of St. Andrews in four consecutive seasons, the Isobel and the Nightingale of South Queensferry and the Gift of God of Burntisland twice in four years - all averaging cargoes of over 100 tuns. Some specialised in the trade to Bordeaux, others to Cadiz. In a few cases it has been possible to build up a trading pattern for a vessel over several years. The Amity of Burntisland was probably one of the largest vessels sailing regularly between the east coast of Scotland and the continent of Europe at this time. She is recorded as carrying 152 tuns of wine on one occasion, on another it is stated that she carried cargo and a complement of thirty persons.[1] Her known voyages are as follows, the incoming ones recorded in the Merk per Tun Accounts, the outgoing ones (for which she had to be given a bill of health stating that the crew were free of plague) in the burgh records:-

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1. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.52.

January 1644	-	from Cadiz with wine,
September 1644	-	to Cadiz with wax, linen, knappald and cloth
January 1645	-	from Cadiz with wine
January 1646	-	from Cadiz with wine
September 1646	-	from Danzig
September 1646	-	to Cadiz with wax, lead and timber

Her movements between January and September of each year are unknown, but it would be interesting to know whether she was in the habit of importing Baltic goods to Scotland and then shipping part of the cargo to Spain, as she obviously did in September 1646 and probably in September 1644, before returning with a cargo of wine.[1]

The Margaret of Queensferry appears to have followed a similar pattern. Although slightly smaller, she carried 112 tons of wine on one occasion and as many as 24 people.[2] Her known voyages were:-

August 1643	-	to Cadiz with wax, linen and knappald
January 1644	-	from Cadiz with wine
October 1644	-	to Cadiz with wax, linen and red herring
January 1645	-	from Bordeaux with wine
January 1646	-	from Bordeaux with wine

Vessels and their skippers obviously specialised in certain trade routes, occasionally in commodities, but what of the average Scottish merchant engaged in foreign trade? It has usually been assumed that while he may have favoured some areas more than others, he was normally prepared to trade anywhere within the limited sphere of seventeenth-century Scottish commerce and to handle a wide range of goods. It has been shown, however, that most Aberdeen merchants concentrated their activities on one geographical area, and when the Privy Council enquired into methods of payment in the Baltic trade, they asked the opinions of several Edinburgh men who were described as

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1. For further examples of triangular trade. see Chapter 6, p.223
2. E.R.B.E., 1642-55, (Edinburgh 1938), p.53.

'Easterlyne traderis'.[1] It has also been recognised that specialisation did occur in certain lucrative trades such as wine and tobacco but in most cases, the emphasis was on general merchandise.[2]

If specialisation was to develop or had done so already, it is reasonable to assume that it would be found primarily in the capital city where the volume of trade, the wealth of the burgh and the size of population both within the walls and throughout the hinterland could support such developments. It made sense, commercially, to concentrate one's efforts in a particular area and numerous Edinburgh merchants have been found trading solely to the Netherlands in the early 1620s while some appeared to specialise in Baltic or French trade.[3] William Gray entered fourteen consignments of goods in the customs records of 1621-23, all but one of which came from Norway or Danzig and consisted either of timber or ash and wax. Andrew Ainslie appeared to be specialising in French salt and wine before he switched into grain during the worst months of the 1623 famine, only to return to salt cargoes in the second half of the year. But for many Edinburgh merchants, the Netherlands provided the ideal export market and source of commodities to purchase. While for some the attraction may have been temporary (William Dick imported nothing but 'Dutch' grain in 1622), for others the towns of Rotterdam, Middleburgh and Campvere formed the permanent nucleus of their trading activities, famine or not. In 1621-23, Robert Keith freighted twenty-three different cargoes, nineteen of which came from the Netherlands and

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1. R.P.C.S., 1st series, Vol. XIII, p.120.
2. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.81.
3. The following details are all from S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st series.

consisted largely of dyes and spices, sugar, hemp and currants. Only twice did he become involved in importing grain. John Kniblo, another wealthy and prolific trader imported thirty-two consignments of goods in two years, twenty-six from the Netherlands, and exported twenty-one out of the twenty-three cargoes to Campvere in 1626-28. Only once did he import grain.

Perhaps the most striking case of a specialist in both area and commodity was George Suittie. Although he can be found importing paper from Northern France and grain from the Netherlands during the famine (in partnership with Robert Keith), the vast majority of his ventures involved Dutch cloth imports. In April 1622, it was taffeta, tufted fustian and grograin from Campvere, in May a case of velvet pasments and silk from Amsterdam, in December 320 ells of Holland cloth from Campvere and the following May 8 ells of crimson velvet and 12 pieces of double grograin. He imported eighteen separate cargoes of cloth in all over a two year period and this would doubtless have been greater had he not become involved in shipping grain during the famine. His exports reflected the same specialisation - 2,040 ells of cloth exported in 1624-25 together with 3,900 'woolskins', 4,100 ells of plaiding exported to Flanders and to the Netherlands in 1626-27 and odd consignments of stockings and hides. It can therefore be said with certainty that most of George Suittie's foreign trade in the 1620s was in cloth and clothing items. Unfortunately, the absence of further customs records does not allow us to follow his career over the next two decades. It would have been interesting to see whether he continued to specialise in the same goods or whether he branched out into other areas and merchandise. Certainly his wife's testament of 1628 indicated his continuing specialisation in cloth; and the

inventories of other merchants in a previous chapter have suggested that they too were overwhelmingly cloth dealers.

There are also examples of merchants who seemed to favour a few particular commodities although they were essentially general traders. There were opportunists who became involved in importing grain during the famine, men such as William Wilkie who traded in various items from iron to wax and from drugs to sugar for much of 1622 but whose cargoes consisted entirely of grain from October 1622 until August 1623 (some fourteen consignements in all). It seems that he may have miscalculated the amount which he could sell as the following year, he was exporting quantities of rye and wheat together with his partner William Dick, and both of them were described as "speciall importaris" of grain by the Privy Council.[1]

There were also men such as David Murray who were general merchants but specialised in, even monopolised, some small branch of trade, in this case, the export of feathers. In 1624-25, Murray exported a large variety of goods - salmon, herring, hides, goatskins, stockings, and cloth - and 125 stones of feathers. In 1626-27, it was 184 stones, the following year 230 stones, mostly to London but with an occasional shipment to Campvere. No other merchant was found shipping feathers from Leith in any of these three years but it is said that at least one ton a year arrived in London from Scotland in the early 1600s, rising to eight tons by 1629-30.[2] If Murray increased his shipments beyond the ton and a half achieved in 1627-28, then he alone may have contributed significantly to this figure while

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1. Hume Brown, op.cit., pp.283-4.
2. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.220.

remaining a general trader handling a wide range of merchandise.

Numerous topics within a general framework of trade and traders have been introduced in this chapter. It remains to be seen what conclusions can be drawn from them. In the first place, the limitations of the source material have to be recognised. Details of Edinburgh's overseas trade, discussed at length in the following chapter, are contained in a handful of customs books, scattered throughout an eighty-year period. It would be hard to defend even the most limited re-appraisal of certain aspects of Scottish trade from such fragmented and unrepresentative sources. Nevertheless, their contents suggest points of interest. The size and value of seventeenth -century Scottish ships, the tonnage that they carried, the specialisation of ships and shippers, are topics which appear slightly different in the light of further information. The real problem is that of the difference between capital and nation - can the findings of a survey on the trade of Scotland's largest port and wealthiest merchants be applied to similar aspects of trade nationwide or was the position of Edinburgh and Leith and their trading community so unique in Scotland that such particulars have no relevance to Scottish trade as a whole? On the other hand, can one write of Scottish trade in general without some mention of the role of the capital and its burgess community? An answer to the problem will be deferred in the meantime.

CHAPTER 6 EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

Customs books are the stuff of which trade histories are made and it is unfortunate that they survive in insufficient numbers to allow a comprehensive study of trade in seventeenth-century Scotland to be undertaken. As a result, historians have been obliged to work at the topic in a piecemeal fashion, dealing with timespans and geographical locations as the material allows. Thus we have a history of Scottish trade in the post-Restoration period which relies heavily on overseas customs sources, individual merchant papers and such official Scottish trade figures as are available, notably import and export books, customs and excise accounts and bullion books, which together form an almost unbroken series for the period after 1680 and certainly provide the best nationally-documented years of the century.[1] Scottish trade in the years 1600-25 has also been researched and much information derived from the same foreign customs sources, relevant English customs records and a series of Scottish shipping lists relating to Dundee.[2] Since the publication of these standard works on the subject, local studies have been undertaken for a number of regions, and certain commodities such as grain and cattle have been researched in depth.[3] There are similarities in all these works -

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1. T.C. Smout, Scottish Trade on the Eve of Union, 1660-1707 (Edinburgh 1963), hereafter Smout, 'Scottish Trade'.
2. S.G.E. Lythe, The Economy of Scotland, 1550-1625, (Edinburgh 1960), hereafter Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland'.
3. For example, A. Murray, 'The Customs Accounts of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright 1560-1660', Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society 1965; T.C. Smout 'The Trade of East Lothian at the End of the Seventeenth Century', Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalist Society, 1963; I. Whyte, Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland and 'The East Lothian Grain Trade 1660-1707'; (see over for remainder of footnote *)

they all rely to a greater or lesser degree on customs sources which may be inaccurate or unrepresentative; many rely heavily on figures from the Baltic trade; few are able to shed light on the period from roughly 1630-60, and fewer still can tell us much about the trade of Edinburgh and its port of Leith. This is not surprising when one considers that the sum total of the customs books for the capital city throughout the seventeenth century amounts to only twenty-odd volumes, all of which will be dealt with below, but it is nevertheless an unfortunate omission.

The question of reliability is one which has plagued all research into customs records and it has to be determined at the outset how far these sources can be trusted and to what purposes they are best applied. There are differing opinions on the use of such material; according to one historian, 'Port books are seducers. They have an air of plausibility which they may not merit.'[1] Broadly speaking, customs records are of two types, those pertaining to import and export duties, collected on behalf of the Crown, and local duties or petty customs intended to augment the burgh revenues. A fairly high degree of accuracy is expected of the latter because they were of direct benefit to local finances. Similarly, if the national customs were farmed, it was in the interests of the tacksman to ensure efficient collection of dues, thus maximising his profit, although his control of operations might, in practice, have been limited. In

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* Trans. East. Loth. Anti. Field Nat. Soc.,1979, D. Woodward, 'Irish and Scottish Livestock Trades in the Seventeenth Century' in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout (eds.), Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic History 1600-1900, (1977).

1. Quoted in D. Woodward, 'The Port Books of England and Wales' Maritime History, 3, 1973, p.157.

general, details of a ship, its home port, its destination if outward bound and point of departure if incoming, are reckoned to be reliable together with the nature of the goods on board.[1] It is the problem of quantities which is less easily resolved, firstly because of the smuggling, deception and corruption which was no doubt practised but also because of the multiplicity and inexactness of weights and measures in the seventeenth century. While references to quantities of goods will therefore be treated as approximations, and the possibility of smuggling will be remembered, it is interesting to note that the customs books for 1621-2, like the 1638-9 records, contain several examples of smuggling attempts which were discovered. The goods aboard James Gib's ship from Flanders had to pay triple customs "in respect the goods were apprehendit unentered", and Alexander Mauchane and the skipper of the Rainbow of Middleburgh were both fined £100 Scots "because they did steal away two cases wherein this gear was", the gear consisting of twelve pieces of taffeta, six whole pieces of velvet, half a piece of satin and 165 ells of taffeta.[2] No doubt these represented the tip of the iceberg, the unlucky few who were caught, but perhaps more arrests were made than has been realised.

The accuracy of other details also relied on the competence and knowledge of the clerks involved in compiling the records, and there would appear to be occasional errors in the recording of dates and names of ships in the Leith port books. This is hardly surprising when one considers that 90% of shipping entries occurred in the six-month period April to September and that in an exceptional month such

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1. R.W.K. Hinton, 'Dutch Entrepot Trade at Boston, Lincs., 1600-40', E.H.R., 9, 1956-7, P.467.
2. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First series, E71/29/7.

as July or August 1622, as many as 74 ships and their cargoes were recorded, or up to nine in one day. The similarity of ships' names may also have led to some confusion. There are no fewer than twelve ships called the Fortune or the Good Fortune in the records for the 1620s, whose home ports ranged from Leith itself to Aalborg in Denmark, and from Amsterdam to Stralsund in the Baltic. There are seven ships called the Gift of God , each registered at a different Scottish port, and at least three ships named the Grace of God registered at Leith alone. Add to these a motley collection of Angels and Archangels, Red Lions and Blue Lions, Johns and St. Johns and it is no wonder that errors occurred. It seems reasonable to conclude, however, that most of the details about shipping are accurate and that the information collected does reflect the pattern of Edinburgh's overseas trade for the available years of the century. The quantities of goods referred to throughout this chapter can at best demonstrate trends in import/export trades.

The value of research into trade figures depends not only on the accuracy of those figures but on their ability to reflect the normal state of trade. Unfortunately, the records for Edinburgh and Leith which have survived can in no way be said to cover average or normal years. One must defend the use of unrepresentative figures by suggesting that a 'normal' year was a very scarce occurence in seventeenth-century Scottish history, that abnormal years have the virtue of illustrating an economy under a variety of different pressures, and that any figures, however imperfect, should be utilised in the absence of better ones.

The available customs records for Edinburgh and Leith can be divided into three groups. The first series, under the heading of

Leith entry books, covers six years between 1611 and 1628, and contains details of both imports and exports.[1] With the exception of 1611-12, which appears to have been uneventful, the remaining years were distorted by either famine (1621-23) or war (1626-28). The second group, covering the period 1636-47, is the record of a local tax on imports, the Accounts of the Merk per Tun and per Pack, and most of the years within this series were affected by either civil unrest and war, or by plague.[2] The final group, consisting of Leith entry books and customs accounts, covers seven years between 1665 and 1675.[3] Both import and export books are available but the series is marred by the Dutch wars of 1665-67 and 1672-74. These are the only remaining customs records for Edinburgh and Leith, apart from a few slight volumes dealing with imports of tobacco, and accounts for the period 1680-99 which have already been researched. In addition, under the heading of Edinburgh customs accounts, there are records of goods brought overland from England via the three Border customs posts of Berwick, Middle March and Carlisle, a few for the 1620s and a larger number for the years after 1665.[4] They are essentially a record of the activities of the Scots peddlers who plied their trade in packs of cloth and occasional items of hardware between the two sectors of the United Kingdom. Few of these men deserved the title of merchant, although, as we have seen, there were some substantial traders involved in overland trafficking; however, the study of inland customs records has been limited to one or two examples.

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1. S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First series, E71/29/5-11.
2. E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun 1636-47.
3. S.R.O., Leith Entry Books, Second series, E72/15/2-19.
4. S.R.O., Edinburgh Customs Accounts, E71/30/30, E72/8/1-8.

It has been said that the export trade more accurately reflects economic changes in seventeenth-century Scotland, based as it is on a small range of commodities, than does the import trade with its plethora of necessities and luxuries, national requirements and personal indulgences.[1] Many imports are based on transient conditions - grain in time of famine, gunpowder in time of war - or on whims and fancies - warming pans, ostrich feathers, silk garters, maps. Lists of imports therefore develope little regular pattern, except a seasonal one - nightgowns vie with nails, virginals with vinegar, 'house clocks' with hemp, in an arbitrary fashion.

Exports, on the other hand, are easily compartmented and easily counted as there were never more than thirty-five items mentioned in any of the customs books available, and a figure of thirty-five is only achieved by separating linen yarn from woollen yarn, and sheepskins from lambskins. The most remarkable aspect of this trade is that the commodities appear to have altered very little in the half century between the two sets of export books, a fact only equalled by the remarkable evenness in the number of outgoing vessels for each of the six available years. Five out of the six were war years - 1626-28 saw Scotland involved in wars with both France and Spain at a time when much of Northern Europe was embroiled in the Thirty Years' War, and war with the Netherlands distorted the figures for the late 1660s and early 1670s. These are therefore not ideal years on which to base conclusions about the changing nature of local exports in the seventeenth century.

The geographical structure of the export trade and the

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.205.

nationality of the vessels employed in it are highlighted in Appendix 5. Leith would appear to have had strong links with the Low Countries, France and England, and in wartime, these markets became virtually interchangeable. When the French trade was temporarily lost in 1627 and 1628, the corresponding trade with England and the Netherlands increased sharply; when the Netherlands was, in turn, out of bounds in the late 1660s and early 1670s, a significant part of both the export and import traffic was transferred to Flanders, the remainder to England. Trade with the Baltic and Scandinavia, on the other hand, was less well represented. For the century as a whole, the number of vessels leaving Leith for Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Baltic ports amounted to between 15% and 20% of the total, compared with over 30% for both England and the Low Countries. It is possible that this was a distortion produced by war but figures for the available peacetime years are only slightly higher - 21% of all vessels, for example, left Leith for the Baltic/Scandinavia in 1611-12. While imports will be dealt with in greater detail elsewhere, it is worth noting that in the 1620s and 1660s/70s, incoming vessels from these regions seldom accounted for more then 30% of total entries, even in the famine years of 1621-23 when grain imports from the Baltic might have been expected to be substantial. These findings would suggest that Leith may have been under-represented in any survey based on the Baltic trade and the use of the Sound Toll tables, and as we have already seen, the history of Scottish trade in the seventeenth century has relied heavily on these sources.

A majority of the vessels employed in the export trade, around 60%, were Scottish-owned but during the Dutch wars, Flemish carriers replaced many local ships. The Scottish vessels, as noted in a

previous chapter, came almost entirely from the ports of south-east Fife and the southern shore of the Forth estuary, as well as from Leith itself.[1] However, it would appear that the trade of Leith was never dominated by local vessels to the same extent as the trade of smaller ports. Foreign ships always accounted for at least one-third of the total entries, imports and exports, throughout the century. The reasons for this are partly geographical, partly role-based. Edinburgh's relative proximity to her major markets of England and the Netherlands, together with the level of sophistication of her import trade, encouraged foreign skippers to venture north. In addition, her merchants carried on a sufficient volume of trade, under conditions of both war and peace, to make the chartering of foreign vessels a necessity. Above all, Edinburgh's role as capital city, entrepot and distribution point, provided potentially a very large market. The population served by the city and its port was far greater than that which dwelt within its confines, the cargoes exported from its harbour had been parcelled together from many sources outwith the city and the incoming shiploads were destined to be split and distributed throughout much of southern Scotland and beyond. This is a theme to which we will be returning throughout this chapter.

Some interesting facts emerge if we study the outgoing cargoes in detail, beginning with the early years of the century. It will be shown that although the broad pattern of Leith's trade is considered to be a microcosm of the nation's, there are different emphases because of Edinburgh's unique place in the Scottish economy. Only

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1. See Chapter 5, p.187.

four volumes of records exist for the pre-Restoration period, export books for 1611-12, 1626-27 and 1627-28, and a solitary customs account for 1624-25. The export books contain shipping details, (the name of the ship, its master, its home port), destinations, merchants' names and cargoes carried, in chronological order - the tax year ran from November to October. The customs accounts record only the commodities exported, alphabetically, and the quantities owned by each merchant, starting with 'auld brass' (six merchants exported 114 stone in total), and ending with yarn (3,870 lbs. owned by seven merchants), but they do not record dates or details of ships or destinations. The total cargoes entered in the four years are listed in Appendix 4a and they consist largely of predictable items - grain and fish, skins and hides, coal and salt, cloth and clothing, the normal products of the seventeenth-century Scottish economy, together with a certain number of re-export items. Wax, knappald and deals, pitch and tar, undoubtedly from the Baltic, were regular cargoes on the wine ships heading for Bordeaux and Cadiz, a fact which has already been noted for the 1640s.[1] Their insignificance in the years 1626-28 therefore reflects only the temporary abandonment of trade to the wine areas as a result of war and not a long-term change in the importance of re-exports. No ships left Leith for France or Spain in 1627-28 and for that year, neither timber nor tar was exported. In 1611-12, however, eighteen vessels sailed for the Biscay coast and Spain and over half carried some quantity of Baltic goods - 2,500 knappald aboard the Blessing of Leith, bound for Bordeaux, 50 shippound of wax and 1,000 knappald aboard the John of Leith for Cadiz and an assortment of items

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1. Chapter 5, p.210.

aboard the Thomas destined for Bordeaux, 6 lasts of tar, 2 barrels of pitch, 50 Norway deals, 5 half-barrels of nails and 8 chalders of coal. Coal and fish were, in fact, the only other cargoes sent to these regions, with fish predominating in the months from October to December, and other commodities from July to October when little fish was available.

These, therefore, were the cargoes which helped to purchase the first of the new season's wine, which normally began to appear in Edinburgh in November and early December. Doubts have always existed as to how Scotland paid for its large imports of wine, and fish has always been considered the main export item in this trade, together with some coal and cloth.[1] It was also reckoned inevitable that a considerable amount of specie would be sent to France to purchase wine but the local records demonstrate that imported goods from other parts of Europe could be sold successfully in return for alcoholic beverages. A small but significant triangular trade existed between the Baltic, Scotland and the wine-producing regions, a trade which may have been unique to Leith, the main wine-importing centre for Scotland, but could equally have been fostered in Dundee, the port which handled the second largest quantities of wine in the early seventeenth century.[2]

Other imported commodities found their way out as export cargoes. Small amounts of wine were sent to Ireland and Norway, some Baltic goods appeared in vessels bound for English ports and Spanish salt ended up aboard ships to the Baltic. How much of this was surplus to

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.183-4.
2. Ibid, p.178.

local requirements and how much deliberately purchased with a view to re-export is impossible to say but Edinburgh merchants were well placed to engage in this type of trade if they wished. The evidence suggests that the market for Baltic produce in southern France and Spain was actively pursued during the first fifty years of the century.

Scottish merchants have been accused of conservatism in their trading ventures and there is little in the Leith records to refute this point of view. There are occasional cargoes to more exotic places - a shipload of barrel hoops to the West Indies in 1611 and a cargo of herring to Marseilles in the same year. There was also a voyage to Italy in 1627 with wheat, wax, herring and salmon, the forerunner of others in the 1630s.[1] It seems likely that this first recorded voyage was an attempt to find alternative markets for some of the fish which would normally have been destined for France in peacetime. A glance at the tables of commodities in Appendix 4a shows that exports of both herring and salmon were apparently maintained at a level similar to that of 1611-12 during the war years when access to Scotland's best customer was closed (the last recorded departure from Leith to France was in March 1627). That Scottish merchants were able to find alternative markets for fish in these difficult years is perhaps an indication that they had been diversifying in the early seventeenth century. The following table gives destinations for fish exports in the three years for which figures are available.

The increasing importance of the Baltic countries as a market for Scottish fish in this period has been commented on before and these

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1. E.R.B.E., 1626-41, (Edinburgh 1935),p.196.

figures appear to support such a trend.[1]

TABLE 6.1 NUMBERS OF SHIPS EXPORTING FISH FROM LEITH

Destinations	1611-12	1626-27	1627-28
France	17	6	-
England	-	1	1
Sweden	-	4	3
Netherlands	-	1	5
Baltic	4	4	6
Denmark	3	2	1
Italy	-	-	-
Norway	1	-	-
	25 (275 lasts)	18 (292 lasts)	17 (333 lasts)

Source:- S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First series E71/29/6, E71/29/9, E71/29/10.

Most of the vessels leaving Leith for Denmark, Sweden and the 'Easter seas' in the autumn months carried herring, while at other times of the year, cargoes consisted largely of skins, together with occasional consignments of cloth (both Scottish plaiding and re-exported English cloth), coal, gloves and stockings.

The use of Leith as a trans-shipment point for overseas merchandise is paralleled by its role in inter-regional trade within Scotland. As certain goods entered Leith and were despatched to other destinations, so merchants from other burghs chose to export their produce via Edinburgh and its port and received foreign goods into Leith in return. The early customs records are full of merchants from out of town - they shipped salmon from Banff and Aberdeen via Leith to northern France, and from Montrose to Bordeaux; they shipped entire cargoes of plaiding from Aberdeen via Leith to Flanders, and hides from Aberdeen and Elgin to Campvere, but most importantly they shipped

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.161.

skins from a variety of areas to the Baltic and the Netherlands. The Fortune of Lubeck, bound for Konigsburg in 1627 was freighted almost entirely by Glasgow merchants, the Margaret of Queensferry for Campvere in 1628 had cargoes of skins belonging to three merchants of Glasgow and ten of Aberdeen, the James of Leith in the same year was bound for the Netherlands with cargoes of skins for ten merchants of Wigtown, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright. A glance at the customs book of 1624-25 shows that most of the foxskins and rabbitskins, almost 40% of the lambskins, 10% of the hides and sheepskins, and all the kid and calfskins were exported from Leith by Glasgow merchants, and that large quantities of sheepskins in particular were exported by merchants from the south-west. The same comment has already been made for imports - roughly one ship in eight in the entry books of 1621-23 was freighted by other merchants, most significantly by Glasgow men.

This channelling of goods through Leith is another aspect of trade which marks out the capital city and its port as different from other trading centres in Scotland. West coast merchants, with less opportunity for direct trade with countries to the east, seemed to prefer the overland crossing to Leith in order to ship cargoes of skins and cloth to the Low Countries and Baltic ports; Aberdeen merchants seemed more than willing to ship fish and cloth coastwise to the capital for transportation to the continent. For certain goods, especially lighter commodities such as cloth and skins, Edinburgh and its port acted as a collection point for most of the other ports in Scotland. In this way, towns such as Aberdeen which were market centres in their own right, could be described as within the hinterland of Edinburgh because they were to some extent dependent on the capital and its port.

There are other items in the export books which require some explanation. Grain, for example, is a commodity which figures in all four volumes, particularly bear and wheat. The amount exported in 1624-5 was small, reflecting perhaps the aftermath of the 1622-3 famine, and prices in Edinburgh were still high - the weight of the 1s. wheat loaf (9 ozs in 1623) only slowly increased from its crisis weight during 1624 and 1625.[1] By 1627 and 1628, however, it had risen to 16 ozs. and the price of wheat in the Midlothian fiars for 1628 was one of the lowest recorded for the decade 1628-38.[2] It may have been the low prices at home which tempted men such as William Dick, William Wilkie and Andrew Ainslie, often concerned with grain shipments, to export increasing quantities of wheat in 1627 and 1628. Both Dick and David Jonkin are mentioned in the export books on different occasions as traders in their own right but also as factors for the Earl of Winton and the Earl of Montrose.

Goatskins were commonly sent to London in the early years of the century, and there is a figure of 8,000 sent from Scotland to London in the English port books for 1621-2, said to be a peak year.[3] Numbers must have increased substantially during the decade of the 1620s since the amounts from Leith alone in 1627 and 1628 were 6,400 and 11,020 respectively. It would appear from these and other figures that a not inconsiderable proportion of the total goatskins, perhaps somewhere in the order of one-third, were channelled through Leith.

Hides and other skins are more difficult to quantify. It is said

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1. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.238, p.247 and p.258.
2. A. Bald, The Farmer and Corn Dealer's Assistant (Edinburgh 1780).
3. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.220.

that Scottish exports of these two commodities averaged over a quarter of a million annually in the 1620s, and these figures relate only to the Baltic trade.[1] An average of 140,000 skins and hides left Leith in the three years of the decade for which figures are available, but interestingly, very few were destined for the Baltic. Over 70% of the skins and hides (excluding goatskins which went exclusively to London) were exported to the Low Countries, highlighting once more Leith's strong links with these markets and her low level of interest in the Baltic. A very rough estimate, based on the above figures, would again suggest that Leith handled about one-third of Scotland's exports of these goods. The hinterland which supplied such a large proportion of the nation's output is difficult to evaluate but there has been enough evidence already in this thesis to indicate that large parts of Dumfriesshire, Galloway and Kirkcudbright looked to Edinburgh as a market for their goods, as a source of imports, as a place to which young men could be sent as apprentices. The south-west very probably sent quantities of skins and hides directly to the capital for export; further amounts may have been sent indirectly via Glasgow merchants whose names we have seen appearing in the export books of Leith. Merchants from Aberdeen and other burghs of the north-east have also been noted as traders in Leith. Edinburgh and Leith, which must have been the natural outlet for the pastoral products of the Lothians, seem to have drawn on other areas much more distant from the capital.

A straightforward comparison of material in the early export books with that in the later series is only possible in part. Both the export and import books for the post-Restoration period are much

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1. Ibid, p.160.

less informative than those in the earlier series, a feature apparently common to port books of the later seventeenth century.[1] Considerable ambiguity has resulted from the practice of omitting a vessel's name, almost invariably mentioned in the 1620s, and referring to 'John Brown's ship' instead. The system of registration had also changed from one in which a ship's arrival or departure was logged together with its entire cargo, to one in which individual merchants signed for their goods as they were loaded or unloaded, or as the duties on goods were paid. Instead of each vessel's entry being completed on one page of the customs book, consignments of goods belonging to a single ship were spread out over numerous pages and sometimes several weeks, and interspersed with cargoes from other ships. Under these circumstances, it becomes more difficult to calculate the number of merchants and cargoes assigned to any one ship or any voyage by that ship, and this is particularly noticeable at the beginning and end of the custom year (October/November). At the beginning of the year, consignments often refer to ships which were first entered at the end of the previous year and similarly, at the end of the year much of the cargo of any given vessel will be entered in the following customs book. Almost inevitably, few consecutive years are extant for the 1660s and 1670s.

The change in the system of registration of ships and cargoes, together with a seemingly more careless attitude on the part of the clerks has resulted in a far less satisfactory analysis of the material than was undertaken for the 1620s. It is no longer possible, for example, to demonstrate the extent of Edinburgh's hinterland by

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1. Woodward, op.cit., p.153.

referring to the number of Scottish merchants who shipped goods via Leith. Information of this type does not exist although one cannot presume from the silence of the records that Edinburgh was no longer an attractive trans-shipment point for the out-of-town trader. Similarly, while detail is more scant for the later years and the records less thorough, this does not imply that, for the limited information they supply, their reliability is more questionable.

One additional scrap of evidence which might be of interest to the seventeenth-century social historian is indicated by the later customs books - namely the literacy of the traders involved, since every consignment of goods entered and taxed had to receive a written signature. For the most part, the signatures are clear and well-formed, sometimes prefaced by a statement such as 'paid by me' followed by the merchant's name, sometimes signed 'for my master' by an employee. There are a few examples of merchants who printed their names, badly and in childlike fashion, several examples of craftsmen and mariners who only signed their initials and one example of a skipper who simply made a mark on the page.

There are only three export books for the second half of the period under review and each of them refers to a year of war against the Dutch, 1666-7, 1671-2 and 1672-3.[1] Comparisons with the more numerous import books for the 1660s and 1670s suggest that all trade figures were probably running at between one-half and two-thirds of their normal level during the war years and that there was an overwhelming dependence on foreign shipping, particularly in the export trade. For 1666-7, most foreign vessels were Flemish together with a

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1. S.R.O., Leith Entry Books, Second series, E72/15/6, 11 and 14.

higher number of Swedish carriers than ever previously noted. It has been difficult to decide the nationality of many of the vessels, largely because they are referred to only by their masters' names, at least in the 1670s, and given wartime conditions, it is less likely that ships actually arrived at the ports which their embarkation papers suggested. Tables of shipping destinations and nationality of vessels are therefore deemed to be less accurate than similar ones for the 1620s.

There were some months of peace, however, in two out of the three years and these suggest that a few vessels headed for more unusual destinations than could be found in the earlier records, although they are insufficient in number to indicate considerable change in the recipients of Scottish exports. Five ships left Leith in the months of September and October 1667 for Tangier, one vessel sailed earlier in the year for Virginia with a cargo of salt and two ships were destined for Lisbon in early 1672. In April of the same year, a vessel was recorded as bound for Barbados with a cargo of one dozen shoes but we are left to guess what else it proposed to take on board before venturing on such a hazardous trip. It is possible that a further element of the cargo was to be a human one; there are several references in the council records of this period to proposed voyages to Virginia or Barbados, either with those who would 'go willingly' or with 'such vagabounds and idle persons as ar not fitt to stay in the Kingdome'.[1] The vessels bound for North Africa carried a variety of goods with wheat, salmon, iron and knappald predominating, the last two items suggesting that Baltic goods, already noted in the earlier

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1. E.R.B.E., 1665-1680, (Edinburgh 1950), p.37 and p.13.

records, were now being tried in other areas similar to Spain. For the most part, however, destinations were very similar to those in the 1620s, with England, the Low Countries and France receiving most of the cargoes.

Many commodities remained the same as before, although lead ore is mentioned on several occasions and exports of local foodstuffs - eggs, lobsters and oysters, either fresh or pickled - appeared for the first time. The oysters were mostly sent to English ports, to Newcastle, Whitby, Scarborough, Hartlepool and Hull as well as London, and some found their way to Flanders and Danzig, but lobsters and eggs went exclusively to London. In 1671-2, which appeared to be a particularly depressed and dangerous year for trade, almost half of the vessels leaving Leith were said to be heading for English ports and especially London, presumably one of the safest voyages which could be undertaken in wartime. In addition to edible products, London continued to receive increasing quantities of feathers, yarn, ticking, linen and an ever-widening range of skins from goat and kid-skins to fox and coneyskins, and even dogskins, either grey or black.

1672-3 was a further slack year, a reflection of the continuing war, with trade divided fairly evenly between English and Flemish ports and only a small number of vessels embarking for more distant parts. The one remarkable feature of the year was the enormous quantity of plaiding exported, four times the next highest figure available for Leith exports during the century. No explanation is readily forthcoming but one other figure exists which suggests that the Aberdeen cloth industry, undoubtedly the source of Leith's exports, might have been experiencing a period of real prosperity in the early 1670s. 400,000 ells of woollen cloth were said to have left

the city in 1674 alone, but this figure was dismissed as an exaggeration or a wholly exceptional year, as figures in the customs books for 1668-70 and 1690-1 varied only between 138,000 and 168,000 ells annually.[1] It has already been shown how much trade existed between Aberdeen and Leith and how Aberdeen merchants frequently shipped their goods from the capital rather than their home town. The Leith export total of nearly 200,000 ells for 1672-3, if repeated the following year, would account for half of the cloth which was said to have left Aberdeen in 1674, leaving a further 200,000 ells to be entered in the customs books and exported direct, a figure not much above those quoted for more 'normal' years.

Of the three years, 1666-7 perhaps offers the greatest interest, not so much as a result of the goods exported but because it is the only year for which an import book is also available. Roughly 80 vessels are recorded in each of the two books, of which 25 can safely be identified as the same vessel, having the same master and frequently completing a round trip to the same port. Some of the information about cargoes is routine - the King David of Ostend arrived from thence with white iron, raisins, needles and whalebone and left for its home port with butter and salmon, the 'Sampson of Suricksee' (Zierikzee) arrived from Flanders with onions and barrel hoops and left for the same port with oysters, the Lovitt of London entered Leith with cabbages, carrots and onions and returned to London with malt. Of greater interest is the voyage of the James of Pittenweem which arrived from 'Gottenberg' (Gothenburg) with iron, tar and pitch and embarked for Tangier still carrying iron together with salmon and

1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.234-5.

wheat. The most illuminating details however are those which refer to dates of arrival and departure of each vessel. Although one cannot be certain that the dates recorded were exact (they probably refer to the first consignment to be unloaded and the last to be embarked), they nevertheless give a reasonably accurate impression of the turn-round time of each ship.

It would appear from the dates given that half of the vessels had a turn-round time of between one and fourteen days but that one-fifth exceeded twenty-eight days in port. Of the eight vessels which entered Leith and left within a week, the majority were engaged in round trips to the Low Countries and carried limited cargoes - several arrived with onions and left with oysters or lead ore. However, it would not be true to say that a rapid turn-round was necessarily associated with a small number of merchant consignments or with the slacker trading months of the year. The Concorde of Rotterdam entered Leith on the 11th September with goods for thirteen different merchants and left seven days later, one of fourteen vessels to dock at Leith that month, making it the second busiest month of 1667. In May there were sixteen arrivals but the St. John of Ostend managed to return to its home port after only six days in Leith, with a cargo of plaiding and hides.

There are no obvious reasons why the longest-stay vessels, those which remained in Leith for over three weeks, did so although there are a number of possibilities. The Providence of Leith, the only local ship to dock in 1667, spent 54 days in port between January and March, having unloaded a large assorted cargo from London, belonging to 26 different merchants. She finally left for Hull with herring on board. The Morning Star of Bruges also carried a large and varied

number of consignments and remained in port for over four weeks before attempting a winter crossing of the North Sea with a cargo of lead ore, tallow and plaiding. A large cargo during the winter season probably contributed to the delay of both vessels. Those ships which were destined for longer voyages often took several weeks to collect both cargoes and stores - the Green Parrot of Stettin bound for Bilbao, the James of Pittenweem for Tangier, the Humelfiar of Stockholm returning home and the St. Jacob of Ostend for Gothenburg all waited for periods of three to five weeks in port, but so did the Dulcebella of Newcastle bound for Berwick with wine and the Sampson of Antwerp for Flanders with oysters.

No conclusions can be drawn from such a limited sample in a quiet trading year and examples have been quoted largely for the sake of interest. It seems that the harbour of Leith could cope with between 80 and 100 vessels, both inward and outward, in any year without undue delay and that for 1667, delays probably did not result from congestion or the time of sailing. There are import books for several years during the century, however, in which ship arrivals alone exceeded 200 per annum, and in two known years (1621-2 and 1622-3), they topped 300. Chronic congestion would certainly have been expected under these circumstances; but the figures for 1666-7 indicate that voyages were not necessarily prolonged by the inadequacy of Scottish harbour facilities.

To obtain an impression of the shipping year, it is to figures for arrivals rather than departures and imports rather than exports that we must turn. The table overleaf depicts the monthly arrivals in Leith for four sets of two-year periods and shows the variability of sailings, month by month and year by year, and the wide ranging number

of shipping entries, from peak famine years to depressed years of war.

TABLE 6.2 MONTHLY SHIPPING ENTRIES TO LEITH

	1621-2	1622-3	1636-7	1637-8	1640-1	1641-2	1665-6	1666-7
Nov.	6	15	8	7	3	2	11	4
Dec.	5	6	20	16	14	22	7	1
Jan.	5	4	10	7	3	8	4	4
Feb.	7	9	14	5	4	16	3	7
Mar.	4	34	28	1	13	12	11	12
Apr.	26	33	42	17	26	20	6	4
May	45	42	34	8	15	30	5	16
Jun.	53	37	30	15	22	20	7	10
Jul.	66	66	24	6	16	25	8	5
Aug.	74	47	31	20	23	15	8	2
Sep.	28	25	16	12	24	28	4	14
Oct.	6	10	24	13	9	12	4	4
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	325	329	281	127	172	210	78	83

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, 1st and 2nd series.

The first two years' figures offer the simplest trading pattern, with six quiet months between October and March, followed by six months of hectic activity, peaking in July and August, but they are distorted on two counts. Firstly they do not include wine ships and secondly, they represent years of great dearth in Scotland, when grain imports from several European areas, and consequently the number of shipping arrivals, rose dramatically. The final set of figures also fails to include wine imports and the very low level of trade reflects conditions during the second Dutch war. The central years are in some respects the most representative. All four are marked by a mid-winter peak in December/January with the arrival of the wine fleet; with the spring came the first of the timber ships from Norway, occasionally as early as March but normally in April, together with the first vessels from the Baltic in April and May. Sailings from both areas continued steadily throughout the summer, usually ceasing altogether by the end of September, while regular trade with England, France and the Low

Countries continued at a low level during the winter.

As already noted, there are three series of customs books dealing with imports in the period 1600-80, covering a total of 18 whole or part years. Few can be said to illustrate a normal trading year in the history of the Scottish capital and its merchant community but interesting comparisons between the series are nevertheless possible. The first, and in some respects the most informative, deals with only two years, 1621-3, when Scotland experienced one of the worst famines of the seventeenth century. The two entry books, well and systematically written, give dates of arrival, names, nationality, master and port of departure of each vessel, together with a full list of cargoes and merchants. The number of ships recorded and the goods on board obviously reflect the need to import large quantities of grain but it is fascinating to see the response of merchants and skippers to a subsistence crisis, as well as to discover the source of the much-needed grain supplies. Some traders continued to import the same range of goods from the same areas, adopting a 'business as usual' attitude while others switched their whole attention to cereal products.

The anomalies of the 1620s figures are highlighted by comparisons with imports in the late 1630s and early 1640s. This series, the Accounts of the Merk per Tun, contains information about the tonnage of cargoes, as explained in Chapter 5, but provides no detail of their content. The single manuscript, deposited in the Edinburgh City Archive, lists the date of arrival, master, port of departure and sometimes the name and nationality of each incoming vessel, data which can be readily compared with that contained in any national customs books. The years in question, however, are hardly normal,

from 1636, suspected as a further year of grain shortage[1], through the political, religious and military upheavals of the late 1630s and early 1640s, to the catastrophic outbreak of plague in 1645-6, but they testify to the fact that trade continued, if not to flourish at least to exist during this difficult period.

The final series covers six years of the 1660s and early 1670s and contains two types of customs book. There are four entry books available for the years 1665-6, 1666-7, 1672-3 and 1673-4, giving the usual details of ships and cargoes, although less fully and more ambiguously than in earlier years. There are also customs and excise books for some of these years and for 1668-9 and 1674-5 but they unfortunately omit details of the voyages, listing only the masters' names and the cargoes carried, from which, however, it is frequently possible to guess the country of origin. The two last-mentioned, the only peacetime years in this series, ought to give some indication of the levels of trade which might have been expected in a normal trading year.

The considerable range of imports to Scotland, necessities and luxuries, primary and manufactured products, has already been commented on, briefly in the previous chapter and at some length in the major histories of Scottish trade.[2] Imports to Leith probably reflected both the greater sophistication of demand in the capital city and the entrepot nature of Edinburgh's trade, but were, in many ways, little different from Scottish imports in general. The half century between the first and third series of customs records saw few

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1. M.W. Flinn (ed.), Scottish Population History from the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s, (Cambridge 1977), p.127.
2. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland' and Smout, 'Scottish Trade'.

changes in shipping cargoes although the range of edible and luxury products continued to widen. Fruits and vegetables, which had consisted of apples, prunes, raisins, currants, onions and the occasional consignment of dates or figs in the 1620s, included oranges, lemons, chestnuts, walnuts, olives and capers by the 1670s and tobacco, from small beginnings in the 1620s customs books, was frequently mentioned in the 1660s, sometimes imported direct from Virginia or Barbados. Fancy items of merchandise, limited to a few ostrich feathers, looking glasses and inkhorns in the earlier years had grown in variety by the later period - from spectacle cases, maps, smoothing irons and musical instruments to cradles, 'chariots' and sedan chairs. Many imports, however, remained the same, the drugs and spices, timber and barrel hoops, salt and sugar, as well as sugar candy and confeits - the seventeenth-century Scot was as much a 'sweet-tooth' as his modern counterpart. The basic nature of many manufactured imports has been commented on before as something of an indictment of Scottish craftwork in the early seventeenth century[1] but the import books of the 1670s contain just as many of the simple items as those of the 1620s - brooms, shovels and earthenware pots, kettles, needles and combs, childrens' toys, frying pans and hair brushes, playing cards, pins and stirrup irons. The quality of Scottish craftmanship would appear to have improved little over the years.

A complete list of cargoes and quantities of imported items for 1621-3 is given in Appendix 6. Although these were abnormal years and the problems associated with seventeenth-century measurements render

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1. Smout, 'Scottish People', p.161.

the totals almost worthless, the lists indicate how much assorted merchandise was imported even in years of severe harvest failure. Although the limitations of the figures are abundantly clear, certain trends might nevertheless be suggested. Edinburgh in the early seventeenth century appeared to import significant quantities of dyestuffs, in contrast to the impression given by customs records for the period 1686-96.[1] There is no yardstick against which to measure imports for the years 1621-3 but between 40,000 and 50,000 lbs. of assorted dyes (azure, indigo, cobalt and woad) were imported into Leith annually in 1621-3, together with an average of 14,000 lbs. of madder, 12,000 lbs. of 'brisell', 140 barrels of orchard litt and 60 balls of 'stra woad' each year, whatever the latter might have represented.[2] These amounts seem substantial for an area reckoned, at least at the end of the century, to be unimportant as a centre of the cloth industry. The imports of madder in the 1620s are only slightly less than those calculated for Leith in the 1690s while the litsters or dyers have already been noted as a thriving craft in Edinburgh. It is possible either that the capital was involved in finishing processes for the products of other areas (as suggested in Chapter 3) or that dyes imported to Leith were then trans-shipped to the north-east or distributed throughout southern Scotland.

The latter theory seems particularly plausible when it is noted that 42% of Scottish imports of madder at the end of the century entered the country through Bo'ness compared with 17% through Leith

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.285 for quantities referred to in this section.
2. 'Brisell' or brazil was a red dye, 'stra woad', a blue-green dye, orchard litt possibly a red or violet dye.

for the same years. Bo'ness, a small unfree burgh to the west of Edinburgh, was one of the fastest growing ports in the years after 1660 and the main distribution centre for lightweight goods to the Glasgow area. Dyestuffs, hops, hats and pots are other items which have been specifically mentioned as suitable for cartage from Bo'ness to points west[1] and it is interesting to note that these are the very goods which were imported to Edinburgh in greater quantity in the 1620s than the 1690s. This would appear to suggest that Edinburgh's entrepot function in certain goods had declined between the beginning and end of the century with the rise of the 'unfree burghs'. This only implies that direct physical trade to Leith in these products was lower; it does not necessarily suggest that the control of trade was in the hands of outsiders since Edinburgh merchants were involved, as we have seen from their shipping activities, in the commercial life of the smaller burghs bordering the Forth estuary.

Cloth, clothing items and haberdashery, mostly from London, are other imports which feature prominently in the 1620s list, but it is difficult to form any impression of quantities because many types of cloth are referred to by the piece. Ships such as the Lion of Prestonpans plied regularly between London and Leith carrying vast assortments of clothing. There were hats of all types, mens, womens, and childrens hats, lined and unlined hats, hats made from felt and hats made from beaver fur, and a selection of hatbands to go with them, from 'coarse' to silk. There were consignments of silk stockings and silk garters, short worset hose, childrens' woollen stockings, plain leather gloves, furred gloves, gloves stitched with

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1. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', pp.138-9.

silk, fringed gloves and muffs. There were callico collars for men, women and children and piccadells[1] in satin for women and callico for men. There were girdles, fringed, embroidered in silk, pure silk, and plain leather; and there were many varieties of cloth - broad cloth and baise, both double and single, perpetuanas and loom work, Norwich kerseys and Devon dozens, fustians and turkey grograins, taffetas and Spanish cloth, Welsh and northern 'cottons', mild Colchester serge and English carpeting, pyropus and rissills, and numerous other types, the significance of which is lost on the modern historian.

The most fascinating insight into Leith's import trade in the 1620s, however, is provided by details of grain shipments in the two years of harvest failure, 1621-2 and 1622-3. Recent research on this, "possibly the worst example of a subsistence crisis in the entire seventeenth century" has suggested that it was associated with an "extremely serious national mortality crisis", resulting in a population reduction which took several years, if not a decade or two, to make good.[2] A discussion of famine in Scotland cannot be separated from foreign trade because imports of victual were the sole means of averting or ameliorating the consequences of poor harvests. The Leith customs books of 1621-3 can add a new dimension to the picture of the famine which already exists, and it is worth pausing to examine them, and the crisis, in greater detail.

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1. Piccadells were ruffs or collars with star shaped points.
2. Flinn, op.cit., p.117; T.C. Smout, "Famine and Famine Relief in Scotland", in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout (eds.), Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History, 1600-1900, (Edinburgh 1977), p.22. Much of this section is derived from these sources.

Like many subsistence crises, that of the early 1620s originated in a bad harvest year which was then compounded by a worse one the following year. The export of grain was banned in late November 1621- a similar move had been taken in England fully two months earlier[1] - and the Privy Council considered that "the most untymous, laite and unseasounable harvest" was likely to result in great scarcity.[2] In spite of these predictions, there seems little evidence to indicate any general or very high mortality during 1622 although there are many references to dearth, and it has been suggested that imports to the main burghs might have prevented a more serious situation from developing at this juncture. The harvest year of 1622, however, turned out to be "catastrophic", not only throughout Scotland but also in England.[3] The impact of dearth south of the border was reckoned to be more of a regional than a national problem but was exacerbated by widespread unemployment, with the north and west particularly badly affected.[4] Poor harvests and high prices in England meant that Scotland could not expect any assistance from that source, as apparently happened in 1642 when imports of English grain to Dundee helped to avert famine there.[5] The sharp rise in mortality during 1623 and the fall in births for 1623-4 both testify to the fact that efforts made to increase supplies of food from abroad were in-

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1. R.B. Outhwaite, 'Dearth and Government Intervention in English Grain Markets, 1590-1700', E.H.R., 34, 1981, P.397.
2. R.P.C.S., 1st series, Vol.XII, p.598.
3. Flinn, op.cit., p.123.
4. Outhwaite, op.cit., pp.391-4 and W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1620-1759', Agricultural History Review, Vol.16, 1968, p.19.
5. T.C. Smout and A. Fenton, 'Scottish Agriculture before the Improvers - an Exploration', Agricultural History Review, Vol.13 1965, p.77.

sufficient to prevent a serious crisis on this occasion.[1] A plentiful enough harvest in 1623 seemed to herald a gradual return to normality and evidence of grain exports in 1624 has bolstered this view, although the problem of vagrancy associated with the dearth occupied the minds of Privy and burgh councils alike well into 1624.

Turning to the local situation, the first reference to famine in Edinburgh occurred in July 1622 when a sum of 1,000 merks was ordered to be distributed equally between the ministers of the town "in consideration of the dearth".[2] In October, the town council passed an act against the fraudulent selling of grain, in which inferior grain was loaded into sacks, topped up with better quality produce and the whole sold at an inflated price. The timing of this act seems to indicate that the council was unusually sensitive to the subject of food supply. March 1623 saw a further gratuity of 1,200 merks being offered to the town's ministers "because of the scarcity of food in the country", and in May a voluntary contribution was organised for the relief of the poor.[3] At the same time, the council made efforts to reduce its responsibilities;

"taking to consideration the grit dearth of this present yeir, quhairby the poore is incressit within this burgh and all uther pairtis of the cuntrey",

it ordered a guard of five paid men to be placed at each of the town's gates to keep out 'idle and sturdy beggars'.[4] May 1623 also saw the plundering of a ship by the inhabitants of Leith after it was wrecked near the town. Apparently these 'poore strangeris' (the ship was

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1. Flinn, op.cit., p.124. Few figures are in fact available on which to base these statements.
2. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.234.
3. Ibid, p.241.
4. Ibid, p.242.

supposedly from Dunkirk, although another source believed it was from Spain) were robbed of armour, clothing and other goods which may well have included items of food.[1] Another account of the same incident states that a Scottish ship carrying some of the Dunkirkers' men and provisions was apprehended on leaving harbour.[2] It is tempting to suggest that the violence and robbery occurred partly as a result of the desperate condition of the townsfolk, although plundering of wrecked ships took place on other occasions. By June 1623, "the famine increased daylie, till at last manie both in burgh and land died of hunger".[3]

A further barometer of conditions is provided by the price of bread in the city during the famine years. The 12d loaf which had weighed 20 oz. in 1620 fell to just over 11 oz. in 1622 and to 9.25 oz. in 1623 before recovering to 13 oz. in both 1624 and 1625.[4] Such a slight improvement does not suggest that the impact of the famine was as short-lived as the silences of the Privy Council records on the subject after 1623 would have us believe. In the first place, the annual burgh price for bread was habitually fixed in October, and in 1623 it might have been expected that a better local harvest would have been reflected in an increased weight of loaf.[5] Figures for Aberdeen also show that imports of grain continued to increase after

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1. Ibid, p.243.
2. A detailed account of the episode can be found in D. Calderwood, The History of the Kirk of Scotland, Vol.VII, (Wodrow Society 1843), pp.572-5 and pp.577-8.
3. Ibid, p.577.
4. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), passim.
5. It is unfortunate that the series of Midlothian fiars prices do not cover the early 1620s as they would have given a further indication of local market distortions.

1623 so that the peak actually occurred in 1623-4.[1] In fact, the Edinburgh records continued to make references to dearth throughout 1624. Three prominent Edinburgh merchants were fined in January of that year for forestalling - they apparently bought grain in Burntisland before it had been offered for sale "to the grit exhausting of the prices of victuall in this tyme of dearth".[2] In April, 1,000 merks were distributed amongst the ministers because of "the present dearth of vivers within this realm", and as late as December there were complaints about the number of vagrants still to be found in the burgh.[3] The problems arising from the famine do not appear to have vanished overnight.

A different angle on the crisis is provided by a letter from the Privy Council to James VI in 1624. It refers to the imports of foreign victual which -

> "has bene so frequent and commoun, and in so exceeding grite abound-ance and quantite, thir tua or thrie yeiris bigane, as the most pairt of the moneyis of this kingdome hes bene exported and bestowit to that use..." [4]

There was great scarcity of money, many people in debt and few willing or able to buy grain from the merchants. As a result of this situation, two Edinburgh merchants, William Dick and William Wilkie, "who wer speciall importaris of this victuall" had considerable stocks which would have spoiled had they not been licensed to re-export it. The contents of this letter have been quoted before in order to show

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1. L.B. Taylor (ed.), Aberdeen Shore Work Accounts, 1596-1670 (Aberdeen 1972), pp.610-13.
2. E.R.B.E., 1604-26, (Edinburgh 1931), p.248. The merchants were David Jonkin, John Hilston and James Cochrane.
3. Ibid, p.252.
4. Reprinted in P. Hume Brown, Scotland before 1700 from Contemporary Documents, (Edinburgh 1893), pp.283-4.

that Baltic grain was paid for in specie and not by Scottish exports and therefore constituted a drain on the country's limited financial resources.[1] There was no ambiguity about the source of the grain; in years of harvest failure, it was considered inevitable that Scottish vessels would make the long and arduous voyage to Danzig or Konigsburg in search of cereal supplies. The Baltic states were well known as the emergency granary of Scotland, and of Western Europe in general, and the importance attached to supplies from this region when domestic crops failed can be illustrated by numerous examples. Referring to the famine of 1587, one author has stated, "as so often happened, the eastern Baltic ports, drawing on the great hinterlands of eastern Germany and Poland, saved the day."[2] The bad harvest of 1621 "was followed by high prices and heavy imports of Baltic grain to the east-coast burghs", and crop failure in Scotland has been deduced partly from the increase in Baltic grain shipments in 1636.[3]

The problem for historians of Scottish trade has always been the almost total reliance on the Sound Toll Tables, the only source from which it has been possible to quantify in any way the amounts of grain reaching Scotland. It is because there are so few alternative sources of information (and the sources which do exist have tended to confirm the Baltic as the main source of supply[4]) that little attention has been given to the possibility of non-Baltic grain imports. In years of dearth, there were other possible options for the Scottish

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.163.
2. Ibid, p.19.
3. Smout, op.cit., p.23 and Flinn, op.cit., p.127.
4. For example, Taylor, op.cit., and Dundee Shipping Lists in A.H. Millar (ed.), The Compt Buik of David Wedderburne, (S.H.S., Vol.XXVIII).

merchant, involving less time and expense; the first was to locate alternative sources of grain in Western Europe, the second was to purchase 'Baltic' grain at a central entrepot, thereby saving time and possibly specie. Both of these options have been suggested by a study of the Leith customs books.

Even a cursory glance at the Leith records for 1621-3 shows that a substantial number of vessels were foreign-owned. The table overleaf gives the nationality and port of departure of grain-carrying ships, that is, those ships which carried only or mostly grain. Vessels which carried only small amounts of grain as part of a larger mixed cargo have been excluded, although there are undoubtedly drawbacks in such a definition. One could argue that a large vessel with one consignment of grain amongst an assorted cargo had as much right to be called a grain ship as a small vessel, carrying only grain whose total cargo weighed no more than the sole consignment of the larger vessel. Fortunately, examples such as this were rare and most vessels fell easily into categories - all grain, no grain, mostly grain, little grain - and it was felt that the few problematic cases were unlikely to alter the main findings. Indeed, were they included, the proportion of 'grain ships' to others would only increase. By this definition, 148 out of 325 ships in 1621-2 and 171 out of 329 ships in 1622-3 were grain ships.

From the table, it is possible to show not only the most important areas of grain supply but also the nationality of the ships most commonly used in carrying grain during the famine. The importance of Dutch shipping and the Netherlands as a source of grain is immediately obvious although there are significant differences between the two years. In the harvest year of 1621, almost half of

the grain carriers were Dutch-owned and over one-third were Scottish but in the following year, with the crisis deepening, the number of Scottish vessels in general accounted for more than half of the total.

TABLE 6.3 NATIONALITY AND PORT OF DEPARTURE OF GRAIN SHIPS, 1621-3

	1621-2	1622-3
Dutch ships from the Netherlands	60	41
Dutch ships from the Baltic	7	2
Baltic ships from the Baltic	18	6
Baltic ships from the Netherlands	2	4
Scottish ships from the Netherlands	24	56
Scottish ships from the Baltic	8	24
Scottish ships from France	3	12
Scottish ships from Denmark	8	4
Danish ships from Denmark	7	4
French ships from France	1	2
English ships from England	1	-
Unknown ships from the Baltic	1	1
Unknown ships from the Netherlands	4	4
Unknown ships from Denmark	1	1
Others	2	8
	148	171
Total ships from the Baltic	34	33
Total ships from the Netherlands	91	101

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First Series, E71/29/7 and 8.

The figures for 1622-3 would tend to support the statement that every available Scottish ship was pressed into service during the famine[1], but of those ships, more than twice the number arrived from the Low Countries as sailed from the Baltic, and over 12% came from France.

The possibility of alternative sources of grain supply was made some years ago by Professor Lythe and information from the Leith

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.157.

records confirms his suggestion that -

"because of their dominance over the finance and transport of the European grain trade, the Low Countries could sometimes help Scotland a little when her own crops failed."[1]

A glance at Table 6.3 shows that this was something of an understatement. The familiarity of Dutch markets to Edinburgh merchants and the comparatively short sea crossing to the Netherlands are two plausible reasons why, in crisis years, it would have seemed more sensible for Edinburgh, and perhaps other east-coast merchants, to send to the Low Countries for grain already imported from the Baltic instead of risking a lengthy, time-consuming and more expensive venture to the Baltic themselves. Furthermore, if payments to Baltic countries were a problem and necessitated the export of specie, it would surely have been more advantageous to obtain grain indirectly from the Netherlands where there was always a ready market for Scotland's exports. The 'very powerful grip' which Edinburgh and Leith retained over Scottish trade with the Low Countries[2], the large and sophisticated market which they provided for a wide variety of Dutch goods and their role as entrepot for many products of their extensive hinterland (coal, salt, hides, plaiding) ensured their merchants easy access to Dutch grain supplies; the same was less likely to be the case for merchants from the smaller burghs.

There seems to be little doubt, however, that the availability of grain in the Netherlands was known in other parts of Scotland. Merchants of Aberdeen, Linlithgow, Burntisland, Dumfries, Glasgow and Montrose were all found importing Dutch grain on ships which entered

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1. Ibid, p.242.
2. Ibid, p.244.

Leith in the famine years, but whether they were engaged in shipping grain direct to their home towns as well or were hoping to make an easy and profitable sale in the capital as a result of the dearth is unknown. The Aberdeen Shore Work Accounts show that few grain ships sailed direct from the Netherlands to Aberdeen and that by far the largest direct source of grain was the Baltic and the same appears to have been true for Dundee.[1] If this pattern was repeated throughout Scotland, it would suggest that the Low Countries were only a substantial source of grain for Edinburgh and perhaps other local burghs, and that this resulted from the highly-developed trading links between the capital and the main Dutch ports. Even when grain ships were removed from the total shipping entries to Leith (Appendix 5c), over 50 vessels each year, almost one-third of the whole, came from the Netherlands with a vast assortment of general merchandise.

Table 6.3 also indicated sources of grain other than the two already mentioned, notably Denmark, perhaps included with Baltic ships in most calculations, France and England, both of which have been noted as selling grain to the Scots on some occasions.[2] Amounts involved, however, were small in comparison with those purchased from the major grain dealers. It is also possible that the Netherlands was the most important supplier only for the two years in question. While little evidence for other famine years is available, figures for shipping entries to Leith in the three autumn months of 1636 seem to suggest that Baltic imports were greater than those from the Low Countries, although this assumption is based solely on the number of

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1. Taylor, op.cit., pp.112-119 and Flinn, op.cit., p.122.
2. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', pp.18-22.

vessels from both areas and not on quantities.[1]

There are dangers in attempting to quantify the amount of grain imported to Leith in 1621-3 - with high grain prices, the temptation to smuggle or defraud the customs officials must have been strong - but it would be interesting to compare the total grain shipments with the amounts which paid duty at the Sound. Figures for grain leaving the Baltic in Scottish ships were given as 1,308 lasts in 1622 and 1,493 lasts in 1623 and the highest grain movements from the Baltic in this period were said to have been in 1587 when 1,817 lasts were recorded.[2] Since these are quantities noted on board Scottish ships at the Sound and not at the ship's destination, there is no way of determining how much of this amount actually reached Scottish ports. It is also worth remembering that imports from the Baltic have always been thought of as large; it is therefore particularly interesting to compare them with amounts imported to Leith alone in Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4 SOURCE OF FOREIGN GRAIN IMPORTS TO LEITH 1621-3 (LASTS)

	France	Netherlands	Baltic	Denmark	England	Total
1621-2	177 (3%)	2709 (46%)	2425 (41%)	629 (11%)	-	5940
1622-3	465 (8%)	3181 (58%)	1432 (27%)	230 (4%)	63 (1%)	5372

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First Series, E71/29/7 and 8.

According to the Leith customs books, 2,425 lasts of grain arrived from Baltic ports in 1621-2 and 1,432 lasts in 1622-3; added together they were 35% higher than the amounts noted on board Scottish ships clearing the Sound during the same period. As a proportion of total grain imports to Leith, however, they constituted roughly one-

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1. E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun, 1636.
2. Quoted in Flinn, op.cit., p.122 and p.124; Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.19.

third, with over one-half recorded as imports from the Netherlands. The total grain imports for the two-year period of 11,312 lasts are very substantial in comparison with any previously quoted figures and indicate the drawbacks of relying solely on the Sound Toll Tables.

If direct comparisons are made between Scottish cargoes at the Sound and Scottish cargoes at Leith, it will be found that in 1622, 55% of the 1,308 lasts recorded in the Danish customs arrived at Leith and in 1623, 64% of 1,493 lasts. These figures imply either that Edinburgh's share of Scottish grain imports was very high or that amounts registered at the Sound have been considerably underestimated. If between half and two-thirds of Scottish cargoes were destined for Leith, it suggests that Edinburgh was a grain distribution point from which consignments were sent throughout a wide area of the country. It does not seem likely that this proportion of imports, together with even greater amounts from other sources, was destined only for consumption in the city and its immediate environs, unless the famine was reckoned to be worse in the Edinburgh area than elsewhere.

The extent to which the capital city and its merchants dominated the east-coast grain trade is a question which cannot be answered with any degree of certainty in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, although it has been suggested that the grain hinterland of the city stretched as far as the Moray Firth at this time.[1] Most of the information collated applies to the second half of the century, and then to normal or average harvest years, but it would appear that estates from Orkney to north-east England supplied Edinburgh with

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1. I. Whyte, Agriculture and Society in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, (Edinburgh 1979), p.231.

grain in the post-Restoration period.[1] The dislocation caused by famine throughout rural Scotland would have resulted in the need to import grain in sufficient quantity to offset national shortfalls, and after the needs of the city had been catered for, there might have been a little left over for distribution. On the other hand, it would appear from the Aberdeen records that between one-quarter and one-fifth of the grain ships entering the burgh in 1621-3 (after excluding the small coastal vessels from other north-east ports) came from Leith.[2] The situation was undoubtedly confused, especially in 1623, when some ships were leaving Aberdeen laden with grain for the capital. David Cornell's vessel, for example, bound for Leith, carried 'ane bark's ladening of meill' for Robert Keith, merchant burgess of Edinburgh.

Before leaving the subject of famine and the grain trade, one final point should be made. When the Privy Council wrote to James VI of the great scarcity of money and the number of debts in 1624, were they exaggerating the problem, as official documents were known to do, or was Scotland experiencing an economic as well as a subsistence and mortality crisis? The slow recovery of the Edinburgh shilling loaf from its crisis weight, the references to continued dearth and vagrancy during 1624, a population weakened by famine and possibly disease, the loss of specie and disruption of normal trade, and the fact that recent research has referred to the years 1621-3 as 'a national disaster' all combine to sow the seeds of doubt as to the supposed prosperity of James' final years.

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1. Ibid, p.225.
2. Taylor, op.cit., p.112.

The customs books for 1621-3 can be used to illustrate other aspects of Leith's trade in the early seventeenth century. Even when allowance has been made for Dutch grain ships, a significant proportion of vessels entering the port were foreign-owned, as shown in Appendix 5d. Some were more frequent visitors to Leith than ships registered there - the Sampson of Campvere made eleven trips over a two-year period and the Nightingale of Campvere made seven trips in the same time. Nevertheless, it would probably be true to say that only between 10% and 15% of foreign ships made more than one round trip to Scotland in a year. Apart from Dutch vessels, the only substantial numbers of foreign entries to Leith were from the Baltic ports - Stralsund, Lubeck, Danzig, Rostock, Konigsburg, Greifswald and Stettin - while ships registered in Leith accounted for roughly half of the entries of Scottish-owned vessels in the same period.

When it comes to the areas from which vessels sailed (Appendix 5c) it would appear that little trade existed other than with France, Norway, Denmark, England, the Baltic and the Netherlands. Vessels from Sweden or Spain occasionally arrived in Leith but, although distortions to normal patterns of trade must have occurred as a result of the famine, there is little reason to believe that the favoured trading areas of Edinburgh merchants would have been any more extensive in an ordinary year. It is perhaps worth noting that ships of Leith traded to France in greater numbers than other Scottish-based vessels while the latter had considerable trading links with London - the Falcon of Leith made seven return voyages from Calais in two years while the Lion of Prestonpans and the George of Culross between them made twelve trips from London with cargoes of cloth and haberdashery.

(They always operated on the same routes but the merchants whose cargoes were on board were always different.) Foreign vessels for the two years in question appear to have had a greater share in trade from Norway and the Baltic than their Scottish counterparts, a finding which does not concur with other data for the early seventeenth century.[1] While anomalies in the 1620s might have been the result of the famine, with Scottish ships not normally used for general cargoes pressed into grain importing, it seems likely that a higher number of foreign ships were used by Edinburgh merchants at all times and that many accepted generalisations about Scottish trade do not apply to the capital city.

TABLE 6.5 ENTRIES TO LEITH BY PLACE OF REGISTRATION, 1621-3, 1640-46
(percentages in brackets)

Home port	1621-2	1622-3	1640-1	1643-4	1644-6*
Leith	76 (23)	81 (25)	54 (33)	32 (34)	26 (24)
Scottish	69 (21)	108 (33)	64 (40)	26 (27)	44 (41)
Foreign + unknown	180 (55)	140 (43)	45 (28)	39 (38)	38 (35)
Total	325	329	163	97	108

* The years 1644-6 were entered in the manuscript as one continuous list.

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First Series, E71/29/7 and 8 and E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun.

It might be possible to obtain a clearer picture of Leith's trade by comparing figures for the 1620s with those for the 1640s. The Accounts of the Merk per Tun have been used in a previous chapter to indicate the cargo weights of ships entering Leith. Although the nationality of vessels is available for only three years of the series (Appendix 5d), the information can usefully be compared with similar

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.149 and p.154.

material for the earlier years. Figures for wine ships have been removed from the 1640s entries to correspond with those for the 1620s. Table 6.5 gives details of the vessels according to their place of registration - Leith, other Scottish ports or abroad.

The lower level of Leith ships in the years 1644-6 was probably the result of the plague and the low levels of shipping overall reflected the uncertainties of the 1640s. Although the proportion of foreign ships had fallen from the exceptional years of the early 1620s, it still represented roughly one-third of all arrivals at Leith. It would be interesting to know whether this was inevitably the case in the first half of the century or whether, as happened during the Dutch wars, foreign shipping was only utilised in adverse circumstances. It is possible that the amount of overseas trade through Leith necessitated the use of foreign vessels, a situation which no longer pertained in the post-Restoration period.

TABLE 6.6 ENTRIES OF SHIPS BY AREA OF DEPARTURE, 1621-3
(percentages in brackets)

	Leith ships		Scottish ships		Foreign ships	
	1621-2	1622-3	1621-2	1622-3	1621-2	1622-3
Netherlands	28 (37)	37 (46)	31 (45)	49 (45)	84 (46)	71 (54)
France	13 (17)	24 (30)	8 (12)	19 (18)	15 (8)	5 (4)
Norway	7 (9)	5 (6)	3 (4)	3 (3)	26 (15)	19 (14)
Baltic	13 (17)	11 (14)	7 (10)	17 (16)	41 (24)	29 (22)
England	8 (11)	2 (2)	16 (23)	15 (14)	3 (2)	2 (2)
Denmark	6 (8)	1 (1)	3 (4)	3 (3)	8 (5)	2 (4)
Other/unknown	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (2)	12 (9)
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	76	81	69	108	180	140

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First Series, E71/29/7 and 8.

Table 6.6 and 6.7 show the distribution of local and foreign vessels between the various trading areas and appear to confirm the continued presence of foreign shipping in trade to the Baltic and

Norway. Almost half of the ships from Norway were foreign-owned in the 1640s but the proportion of foreign carriers in the Baltic trade had dropped to around one-third. It nevertheless appears curious that so many non-Scottish vessels were employed, particularly in the timber trade, "where freight charges represented a very high proportion of the value of the cargo at its Scottish destination".[1]

Another notable feature of the 1640s entries is the complete demise of Dutch shipping, which had dominated the import books of the 1620s. Several explanations might be offered, based on the three main categories of Dutch vessels identified in the earlier records. Firstly, there were vessels employed solely in shipping grain to Scotland during the famine years and when the immediate crisis was over, they must have returned to their former trade routes - they certainly could not be adequately employed in Scottish/Dutch trade. Secondly, there were vessels carrying the mixed cargoes which typified Scotland's import trade with the Netherlands. These had also disappeared by the 1640s and seem to have been partially replaced by English vessels which could supply from London a virtually identical list of entrepot goods to those which Scotland had often imported from abroad. Thirdly, calculations from the 1620s show that Dutch ships made up at least half of the genuine carriers entering Leith in that period, the ships which sailed between various European ports, trading in the products of the countries they called at. These too had ceased to frequent Leith, for a number of possible reasons. It is likely that many of the Dutch carriers had found more lucrative trade routes throughout Europe than that to Scotland - this was a period of

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1. Ibid, p.149.

TABLE 6.7 ENTRIES OF SHIPS BY AREA OF DEPARTURE, 1640-46

(Percentages in brackets)

	Leith ships			Scottish ships			Foreign ships		
	1640-1	1643-4	1644-6	1640-41	1643-4	1644-6	1640-41	1643-4	1644-6
Netherlands	23 (43)	14 (40)	8 (31)	6 (9)	8 (29)	9 (20)	4 (9)	-	1 (3)
France	8 (15)	6 (17)	6 (23)	4 (6)	3 (11)	4 (9)	7 (15)	6 (15)	10 (26)
Norway	2 (4)	1 (3)	5 (19)	14 (21)	9 (32)	10 (23)	12 (26)	14 (36)	14 (37)
Baltic	5 (9)	3 (9)	2 (8)	18 (27)	4 (14)	8 (18)	10 (22)	5 (13)	4 (11)
England	8 (15)	9 (26)	4 (15)	16 (24)	1 (4)	6 (14)	2 (4)	10 (26)	-
Denmark	-	-	-	-	1 (4)	1 (2)	3 (7)	1 (3)	2 (5)
Other/unknown	8 (15)	2 (6)	1 (4)	7 (11)	2 (8)	6 (14)	8 (18)	3 (8)	7 (18)
	54	35	26	65	28	44	46	39	38

Source: E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun

expansion and widening commercial horizons for the Dutch. It is also possible that Dutch ships were more concerned with Scottish exports such as coal and salt, and with these cargoes in mind, sailed direct to the ports of Fife or the upper Forth estuary without calling at Leith. It would appear from figures of Scottish ships trading to the Netherlands that native vessels might in fact have taken over the importation of mixed cargoes from the Dutch in the previous twenty years, and the increased importance of England as a source of supply has already been mentioned. All these factors, combined with a certain amount of political unrest both in Scotland and the Low Countries, might account for the almost total lack of Dutch shipping in the Leith records of the 1640s.

If changes have been noted in the nationality of vessels between the two series of Leith customs books, what of the countries from which the vessels sailed? Apart from the inclusion of Sweden as a supplier of imports, differences have been confined to the proportions of incoming vessels. In the 1620s, almost half of all ships came from the Netherlands, between 10% and 20% each from Norway, France and the Baltic and the remainder were unimportant. In the 1640s, the highest proportion of vessels, an average of 25% for the years 1636-47, came from Norway, while fewer than 20%, mostly ships of Leith, sailed from the Low Countries. Trade with England was rather more regular than before, with France it was roughly the same, with the Baltic it was rather less. Detailed figures are given in Appendix 5e. Although the insignificance of the Norwegian timber trade in the 1620s was probably a consequence of the famine, it never acquired the same importance in the Leith records as it did in the Dundee shipping lists, where one in

three cargoes came from Norway[1]; and Baltic trade to Leith only topped 20% of shipping entries in the 1640s if vessels from Sweden were added. The impression given by these figures is that Leith's trade was concentrated in general groceries and luxury items, entrepot goods which could be supplied from the Low Countries or London, or sometimes northern France, and could then be re-distributed throughout an extensive hinterland, by land and sea.

It is hardly worth making comparisons with the entry figures for the 1660s and 1670s because trade was completely distorted by war for three out of the four available years and the fourth entry book fails to give information about the vessel's departure point in 50% of cases. Details from the port books of the 1680s, however, suggest that the proportions of Leith's import trade had changed very little in forty years. The most notable difference was the increased trade with England, which had doubled to nearly 20% of the whole; for the rest, Norway, the Netherlands and the Baltic appeared to retain an almost identical share of entries.[2]

Although little evidence remains of Leith's overseas trade, even less is available for goods transported overland, and records of coastal shipping are non-existent. A solitary customs book dated 1625 lists the 54 trips across the border from England to Scotland with packs of cloth and hardware which were made by 24 burgesses of Edinburgh and 5 of other towns, including Elgin and Linlithgow. The majority of entries were recorded at the customs post of Carlisle; but the only question of real interest is whether some of the merchants

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1. Lythe, 'Economy of Scotland', p.146.
2. Smout, 'Scottish Trade', p.286-7.

named, Thomas Moodie, Gilbert Acheson, Patrick Baxter, Gilbert Williamson, Hew Hamilton and Laurence Henderson were the same men already noted as council members and prominent burgesses of the city. Presumably the goods were entered in the customs book and transported on their behalf by an employee - it seems inconceivable that burgesses in their positions would have personally engaged in trafficking across the border. On the other hand, there is evidence from the customs accounts of Dumfries in 1611-12 that 'substantial' Edinburgh merchants were involved in the packcloth trade - their names were recorded along with numerous Glasgow peddlers for non-payment of customs duty - and a certain Gilbert Acheson was noted as transporting horses to England in 1621.[1]

The same source suggests that many items which passed overland to the south-west borders in the last quarter of the sixteenth century came originally from Edinburgh - tar, paper, lint, plumdames (damsons) - and Baltic goods were apparently carted to the same area, possibly from Bo'ness but perhaps more commonly from Leith, in the period under review.[2] This would appear to confirm that the strong links already demonstrated between the two regions were long-established and not just a feature of the later seventeenth century, when cattle droving to Edinburgh from Galloway (and sheep from the Borders and Ayrshire) were said to have developed with the growth of demand for fresh meat in the capital and Thomas Tucker's report of 1656 stated that most of the trade of Dumfries was with Leith or Newcastle.[3] The significance

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1. Murray, op.cit., p.117 and p.127.
2. Ibid, p.114 and S.G.E. Lythe, 'The Economy of Scotland under James VI and I' in A.G.R. Smith (ed.), The Reign of James VI and I, (1973), p.69.
3. Whyte, op.cit., p.235 and Murray, op.cit., p.124.

of the south-west in the Scottish livestock trade has been emphasised in the years after 1660 when figures become available for exports to England [1] but it is possible that droving to Edinburgh pre-dated this development by several decades. It would have been a natural progression from trade in hides, already noted in the Leith customs books of the 1620s, to trade in live cattle, particularly in the years up to 1645 when both incomes and population were rising in the city.

The customs records of Leith, unrepresentative though they are, offer an insight into particular years of local trade but are less useful in determining trends; without a longer series, they pose as many questions as they answer. They nevertheless contain a wealth of detail about ships, shippers and cargoes and can be used to define the commercial horizons of the merchant community of Edinburgh.

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1. D. Woodward, 'Irish and Scottish Livestock Trades in the Seventeenth Century' in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout (eds.), Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History,1600-1900, (1977), pp.150-156.

CHAPTER 7 THE PROSPERITY OF EDINBURGH

'Having collected his figures, the historian is too often in the position of not knowing whether it is better to use them, or to explain them or to explain them away.' [1]

There has been a tendency in the central sections of this study to concentrate on groups or individuals within the burgess community or to look at Edinburgh in relation to Scotland or to other cities. It is time to return to a theme raised at the start, that of the economic condition of the burgh in its own right during the seventeenth century. Does the source material discussed so far tend to support or refute the outline of Edinburgh's economic and social history given in the introduction; does it contribute to an understanding of the economic condition of the city; if not, are there other indicators of growth and prosperity which have not yet been utilised?

To begin with, the burgess community was studied in detail but it was acknowledged that very little was known about the regulation of admissions. Figure 1 indicated the yearly number of merchant and craft recruits over the century and certain peaks and troughs were identified and related to specific events in the history of the burgh. Ideas were put forward to account for the general trends in admissions - burgess entry might have been restricted by tacit agreement of the council or Dean of Guild Court, it might have been influenced by the council's need to augment burgh revenues or varied according to the burgh's ability to enforce its own laws. It has also been suggested elsewhere that burgess registration was a rough guide to the

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1. Prof. F.J. Fisher, quoted in Scandinavian Economic History Review 12, 1964, p.91-2.

economic condition of a burgh.[1] If this was the case, what should we deduce from Figure 4, which represents burgess recruitment in Edinburgh by means of a seven-year moving average, or Figure 5 which shows apprentice recruitment, calculated by a similar method?

If the two graphs are compared, the most striking feature is the almost identical pattern of craftsmen burgess and apprentice recruits. During the central years of our period, from 1620 to 1670, they moved in unison, falling sharply in the mid-1620s, recovering somewhat during the later 1620s and early 1630s, only to fall again at the end of the decade, following similar peaks and troughs through the 1640s and 1650s and finishing on an upward trend towards 1670. Can these movements be explained with reference to the economic history of Edinburgh? They would appear to indicate a period of depression in the mid-1620s, a partial recovery in the following five years, and a further slump in the 1630s to a low point around 1638. The dramatic surge in recruits to 1645, with an equally dramatic fall to the early 1650s seems to indicate the influence of factors which were not wholly economic in origin but it is possible that the years 1640-45 saw the greatest prosperity of the entire century. Although there appears to have been rapid recovery from the nadir of the Cromwellian years, the resurgence faltered in the early 1660s, to continue from then to the end of the decade and beyond. The 1670s saw the most continuous spell of high recruitment since the first fifteen years of the century.

The lowest apprentice recruitment figures in Figure 5, during the 1620s, seem to confirm the impression that the famine of 1622-3 led to

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1. T. Devine, 'The Cromwellian Union and the Scottish Burghs' in J. Butt and J. Ward (eds.), Scottish Themes, (Edinburgh 1976), p.5.

a short economic recession of some severity; the recovery which took place resulted in recruitment figures which were below those for the first two decades, and the 1630s do not suggest growth or prosperity. This would tend to confirm our suspicions of these years when Edinburgh became increasingly subjected to heavy taxation and extra financial commitments, and when the threat of famine and disease was seldom far away.[1] The substantial improvements which took place up to 1645 suggest that the years of political intrigue and religious zeal were good for business and burgess wealth during this period was indicated earlier by merchant and craft testaments. The decade 1645-55, combining years of plague, military threat and occupation, was a further period of economic depression in the history of the burgh but, according to the recruitment figures, was no worse than the troughs of the 1620s and 1630s. A further recession in the mid-1660s gave way to what appeared to be a decade of greater buoyancy. The picture presented is therefore one in which two lengthy periods of relative gloom were brightened by a spell of intense activity in the middle years. Are there other indicators of prosperity which could now be used to substantiate this view?

Shipping entries have also been used as a barometer of economic activity in assessing the prosperity of a burgh but as we have seen, the customs books for Leith are of limited value, being few in number, scattered, and distorted by extraneous events. The only continuous series of shipping movements for the seventeenth century which contains entries of Leith ships and those of other local ports are the

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1. M.W. Flinn (ed.), Scottish Population History from the Seventeenth Century to the 1930s, (Cambridge 1977), p.6. and pp.127-30.

Sound Toll Tables, the Danish customs collected from vessels entering and leaving the Baltic.[1] Voyages to and from Baltic ports are recorded in these volumes and they are reckoned to be extremely accurate for the number of shipping movements, although less reliable for cargoes.[2] Unfortunately, it has already been noted that Leith's share of trade to this area was lower than might have been expected for a port of its size. It might be possible, however, to gauge the prosperity of the local economy by examining, in addition, the number of ships from the ports of Fife and the Forth estuary which paid duty at the Sound, since Edinburgh merchants owned and chartered vessels from these burghs to a considerable degree.

Table 7.1 shows the number of voyages to the Baltic from the various Scottish ports for each decade of the century and the low level of trade handled by Leith ships is immediately apparent. The role of vessels from Fife was particularly important up to mid-century and although their share fell after 1650, they still accounted for between one-quarter and one-third of voyages through the Sound, while the Forth ports, from small beginnings, had reached proportions comparable with Leith by the second half of the century. The low and declining level of Leith's trade from the 1620s to the 1670s is very noticeable, especially in the middle decades of the century but voyages by other local ships only dropped sharply in the 1650s and 1660s. If all three sets of shipping entries (Leith, Fife, Forth) are

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1. Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport genem Oresund, 1497-1660, ed. N.E. Bang (Copenhagen 1922) and 1661-1783, ed. N.E. Bang and K. Korst (Copenhagen 1930).
2. J. Dow, 'A Comparative Note on the Sound Toll Registers, Stockholm Customs Accounts and Dundee Shipping Lists 1589, 1613-22', Scandinavian Economic History Review, 12, 1964, pp.79-80.

added together, it will be seen that they represented three-fifths of Scottish/Baltic trade in the early decades of the century and rose steadily to three-quarters of the total in the 1630s and 1640s. After the low levels of the next two decades, their share again climbed to roughly three-fifths of the whole in the 1670s.

TABLE 7.1

NUMBER OF BALTIC VOYAGES TO/FROM EACH REGION/PORT BY DECADES
(percentages in brackets)

	Leith	Fife	Forth	Dundee	Other	Total
1600s	198 (16)	516 (42)	41 (3)	251 (20)	220 (18)	1226
1610s	229 (22)	392 (38)	23 (2)	237 (23)	137 (13)	1018
1620s	198 (18)	450 (41)	75 (7)	192 (18)	174 (16)	1089
1630s	139 (14)	503 (49)	139 (14)	100 (10)	143 (14)	1024
1640s	81 (11)	387 (52)	88 (12)	63 (8)	130 (17)	749
1650s	20 (10)	59 (29)	13 (6)	33 (16)	78 (38)	203
1660s	31 (11)	78 (27)	50 (17)	66 (23)	65 (22)	290
1670s	239 (22)	285 (26)	195 (18)	129 (12)	259 (23)	1107

Source: Sound Toll Tables.

From these figures, it would appear that Baltic trade from south-east Scotland was buoyant for the first half of the seventeenth century and that ships of Leith, while few in number, were more than compensated for by other local ships. The greatly reduced number of voyages in the 1650s and 1660s would seem to confirm the depression in trade throughout these years but it is interesting to note that, according to these figures, Dundee suffered rather less than the Edinburgh area after the 1640s and 'other' ports which covered Aberdeen, Montrose and all the west-coast ports (Glasgow, Ayr, Irvine, Dumbarton, Greenock) raised their share of trade considerably and never fell below one-fifth of the total thereafter. It would appear that neither Glasgow nor Aberdeen experienced any long-term economic difficulties after 1651 and that their trade, closely correlated with

their burgess recruitment figures, recovered rapidly.[1] Edinburgh and its immediate hinterland were apparently not so fortunate.

One further point of interest is that figures for Glasgow craft burgess admissions over the period 1620-50 are remarkably similar to those for Edinburgh.[2] There is a drop in new entrants in the early and mid-1620s, followed by a peak in the years to 1630. The 1630s were a volatile decade with a trough from 1636-40 and the 1640s displayed the same pattern of peaks and troughs as figures for Edinburgh. This suggests that certain Scottish factors governed admissions during this period rather than local events. Glasgow craft admissions after 1650, however, developed a stronger upward trend than those for Edinburgh. (Merchant burgess recruitment for both Edinburgh and Glasgow differed from that of craftsmen and will be discussed separately.)

Information from the Sound Toll Tables does not appear to substantiate the theory of an economic recession in Edinburgh and its environs during the 1620s and 1630s but it has to be remembered that in periods of famine, the number of voyages to the Baltic by most Scottish vessels (if not by those of Leith) increased rapidly. The number of Scottish ships paying toll at the Sound was higher in the 1620s and 1630s than it would have been in a famine-free decade. Under these circumstances, it is questionable whether totals of shipping entries for these years can be used as a barometer of economic activity since the activity was generated for the purpose of averting famine and not to further Scottish economic prosperity.

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1. Devine, op.cit., pp.8-9.
2. Ibid, p.10.

Figure 6 indicates the fluctuations in Baltic trade on a year-by-year basis for the entire eighty-year period.

A further indicator of economic activity is provided by grain prices. If supplies were adequate, scarce resources would not have to be expended on grain imports; and a sufficiency in cereal crops could be seen as a pre-requisite of economic prosperity in the same manner as peace and political stability created suitable conditions for growth.

There are two sources of information relating to the annual price of grain in the seventeenth century, the fiars prices, the prevailing prices of commonly grown cereal crops, used to determine payments such as rents, and the burgh bread prices, fixed by local councils as a fluctuating number of ounces to the Scots shilling. Both types are available, the fiars prices for Edinburgh or Midlothian wheat, bear, oats and meal, and the wheat bread price for the burgh. For comparison, the fiars price for wheat and the wheat bread prices are listed below and illustrated in Figure 7.

TABLE 7.2 WHEAT AND WHEAT BREAD PRICES IN EDINBURGH, 1620-79

	Wheat bread (ounces to 1s Scots)	Fiars (wheat) (1 boll in pounds sterling) *
1620	20	- +
1621	13	-
1622	11	-
1623	9	-
1624	13	-
1625	13	-
1626	16	12
1627	16	-
1628	15	14
1629	14	16
1630	10	16
1631	12.5	15
1632	11	17
1633	12	15
1634	13	13

Continued overleaf:-

Table 7.2 continued:-

	Bread	Fiars
1635	-	18
1636	9	18
1637	12	15
1638	14	13
1639	14	12
1640	14	12
1641	11	15
1642	11	15
1643	13	12
1644	-	12
1645	14	11
1646	-	12
1647	10	18
1648	8	21
1649	8	22
1650	-	22
1651	-	21
1652	10	18
1653	12.5	7
1654	15	7
1655	14	12
1656	13	12
1657	14	11
1658	9	-
1659	8	18
1660	9.5	18
1661	9	18
1662	-	15
1663	10	15
1664	12.5	12
1665	-	12
1666	12.5	11
1667	14	9
1668	15	11
1669	-	11
1670	14.5	10
1671	-	17
1672	14.5	12
1673	14	11
1674	8	21
1675	-	18
1676	14	11
1677	-	11
1678	14	12
1679	-	15

* to the nearest shilling
\+ not available

Source: Bread price from E.R.B.E., passim; fiars price from A. Bald, The Farmer and Corn Dealer's Assistant (Edinburgh 1780).

The fiars are not available for the famine years of the early 1620s but they record high prices for all but the final years of the 1630s, the result of local shortages, and six years of peak prices from 1647 to 1652, the highest of the century, as a result of war and occupation, and bad weather.[1] After an unfortunate start, the 1660s are marked by a generally low price level but the early 1670s saw two further peaks in 1671 and 1674. The weight of the burgh loaf fluctuated in a similar manner, reaching a record low weight in the late 1640s, late 1650s and 1674 (8 ozs.) and a marginally higher one in 1623 and 1636. Although price movements between different shires and regions are said to have shown little uniformity in the seventeenth century, a graph of Fife oatmeal prices in the period 1622-52 looks very similar to the pattern of grain prices presented for the Edinburgh district.[2] Every decade listed indicated at least one year of 'famine' weight or price, but, from bread prices alone, the first twenty years of the century saw remarkable stability. Grain prices as an indicator of economic prosperity would tend to support the idea of, at best, unstable conditions for much of the period 1620-1660.

Certain quantifiable indicators of economic growth have been studied but there are others which cannot be reduced to graphs or lists. The prosperity of a burgh depended on two factors, both of which have been discussed previously; the first is demographic, the second geographic. The economic fortunes of a burgh depended positively on population mobility - without constant replenishment from the

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1. Flinn, op.cit., p.150.
2. R. Mitchison, 'The Movements of Scottish Corn Prices in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', E.H.R., 18, 1865, P.283.

countryside, the squalid, disease-ridden urban centre would have ceased to grow - and negatively on the absence of catastrophic demographic change as a result of famine, disease or war. Population mobility has been demonstrated by means of the apprentice groups and apprentice recruitment has been related to the economic condition of the burgh - a circular process can therefore be seen in operation. Adverse demographic change took a number of forms in seventeenth-century Edinburgh but the disastrous plague of 1645 probably outweighed the effects of famine in 1623, 1636 and perhaps other years. When they are all considered together, it seems unlikely that the population of Edinburgh would have grown in the central years of the period.

The geographic factor is that of hinterland, an area which could supply people and resources but which was to some extent economically and socially dependent on the burgh. The relationship was two-way, the burgh acting as market and employment centre for the region but relying on its products, animal, vegetable and mineral to sustain urban growth and commerce. Edinburgh had a potentially large hinterland but its size altered according to product and period; the area from which it drew supplies of grain or hides was different from that to which it sent Dutch goods, and changed through time. The influence of the city depended to a great extent on the influence of its traders, and the prosperity of the burgh depended to some degree on the regions with which it had the most highly-developed trading links.

One way in which it might be possible to map demographic trends is by graphing the burgess testaments registered with the Commissary Court (Figure 8). There might have been a slight time-lag between the date of death and the registration of a will but a sample of over

1,200 wills indicated that over 70% were entered in the registers within a year of death. It seems more likely that merchant testaments would reflect population changes than those for craftsmen, a smaller proportion of whom would have registered a will and this would appear to be borne out by the graph. Although the plague of 1645 is easily identified for both groups, and a rise in mortality is also noted for merchants and craftsmen in the unhealthy years from 1604-9, the 1622-3 famine is reflected most noticeably in the merchant figures and the same can be said for the second outbreak of plague in the late 1640s. After 1670, neither set of figures is of any value because of the drop in total registrations, a feature which cannot be explained.

We have yet to analyse the recruitment figures of merchant burgesses and apprentices, illustrated in Figures 4 and 5. Although there appears to be a strong correlation between changes in craft recruitment and economic conditions, this is less obvious for merchants. Merchant burgess recruitment, buoyant for most of the first two decades of the century, began to fall in the years after 1615 and remained low and stable until the late 1630s. The peaks and troughs of the next twenty years corresponded exactly with those of the craft burgesses but, whereas craft recruitment followed a general upward trend thereafter, merchant recruitment remained low during the 1660s before rising throughout the 1670s. Furthermore, trends in merchant apprentice recruitment did not closely follow those for merchant burgesses. Apprentice numbers rose steadily from a low plateau in the first twenty years and although they followed the same peaks and troughs illustrated in all the recruitment graphs for the middle decades of the century, they continued their upward progress from 1660 to 1680. They appear to have been little influenced by

factors which affected craft apprentice numbers in the first forty years of the century although there are similarities thereafter.

In an attempt to find reasons for the trends in merchant burgess recruitment, it was decided to compare the numbers of recruits with the number of testaments registered in order to see whether the size of the merchant community was more strictly related to population change than to economic factors. Figure 9a shows that for the first half of the seventeenth century, with a few exceptions, the two sets of figures moved roughly in unison and at approximately the same level, but that this was less apparent after 1660. It is therefore possible that the number of merchants was limited to a certain figure by the council in an attempt to restrict the privilege but that the number of craftsmen was allowed to fluctuate according to economic conditions. Figure 9b, illustrating the number of craft recruits and the number of craft testaments shows a less marked correlation between the two, although this is to be expected because fewer craft wills are extant.

Several indicators have been used in an effort to sketch the economic history of the burgh but it would be unwise to draw firm conclusions from them. There seems little doubt, however, that apart from a brief spell in the years 1603-6, the first two decades of the seventeenth century saw considerable prosperity for the burgesses of Edinburgh. The next twenty years are something of an enigma but on balance, it would appear from the financial burdens of the city, from a number of testaments, from grain prices and the records of the famine years, from the burgess and apprentice recruitment figures and from various official documents that the prosperity of the burgh faltered on several occasions, if not throughout the period.

The years of the Covenanters' and Cromwellian rule pose fewer problems of interpretation. Testaments from the 1640s indicate that many merchants were leaving substantial sums of money by Scottish standards and trade figures for the same period do not suggest economic malaise. It seems likely, however, that the plague of 1645 ushered in a period of political and economic turmoil, culminating in Cromwell's occupation of the burgh and it would appear that Edinburgh did not recover as rapidly from the traumas of the years 1645-51 as Glasgow and Aberdeen are thought to have done.

The final years of this study, from 1660 to 1680 are open to considerable speculation. Neither set of customs records examined suggests that trade was flourishing in the 1660s and it was positively depressed in the early 1670s; burgess recruitment figures also fell in the early 1660s, recovering thereafter, but apprentice figures rose steadily towards 1680. The latter, together with low grain prices for most of the decade, might imply that pre-conditions for growth and hope for the future existed but testaments for the period, in complete contrast to the pre-Cromwellian years, indicated very low levels of accumulated wealth and add weight to the impression of economic stagnation in the 1660s. There is little here to suggest the growth and innovation frequently referred to in the Glasgow area at this time, and the small number of manufactories established, some of which led a precarious existence, can scarcely be used as proof of economic prosperity.[1] Improvements in the mid 1670s were probably transient.

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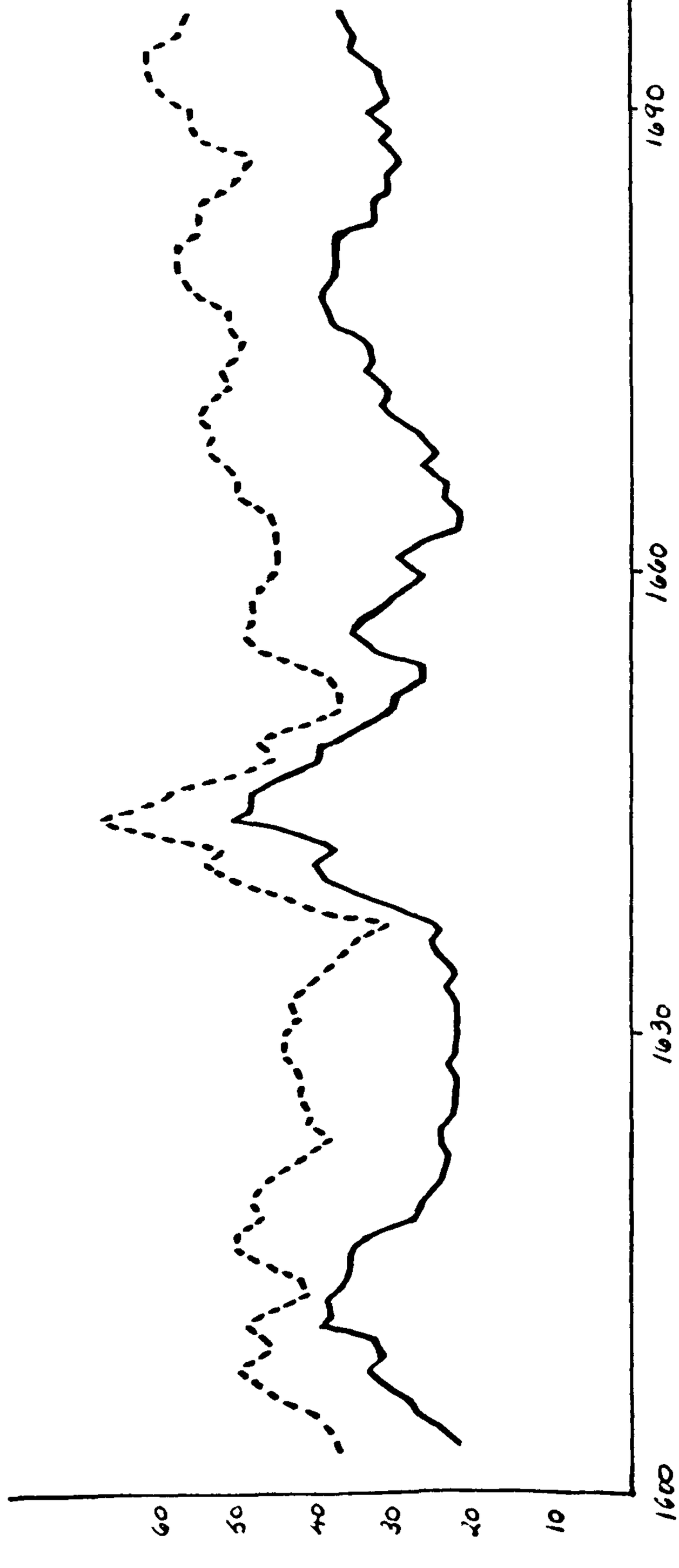
1. T.C. Smout, 'The Glasgow Merchant Community in the Seventeenth Century', S.H.R., 47, 1968, pp.55-7; for the establishment of industrial enterprises, see J. Marshall, Presbyteries and Profits, (Oxford 1980), Appendix and A.G. Thomson, The Paper Industry in Scotland, 1590-1861, (Edinburgh 1974), p.7-8.

The booming conditions of the years 1674-9 when Scottish vessels were used as neutral carriers on the trade routes of Europe were a temporary, though welcome, phenomenon, dragging overseas trade out of the slump caused by two Dutch wars within a period of ten years, but there were few signs of long-term commercial success.

It should be remembered, however, that generalisations do not always apply to individuals. There would be prosperity for some in time of hardship for the city, there would be a degree of success for a few even in time of general adversity. The fortunes of the majority were governed for the most part by the prevailing conditions within the burgh but it was always possible for some to turn apparent disaster to advantage. Merchants have been known to profit from years of harvest deficiency, to develop new markets when others were closed in wartime, to prosper when the burgh stagnated. The ambiguity of the records makes it difficult to pass judgement on the prosperity of individuals within the burgess community, almost impossible to satisfactorily assess the condition of the burgh.


60
50
40
30
20
10
1600
1630
1660
1690
4 - BURGESS RECRUITMENT (4 YEAR MOVING AVERAGES)
— MERCHANTS
--- CRAFTSMEN

FIGURE

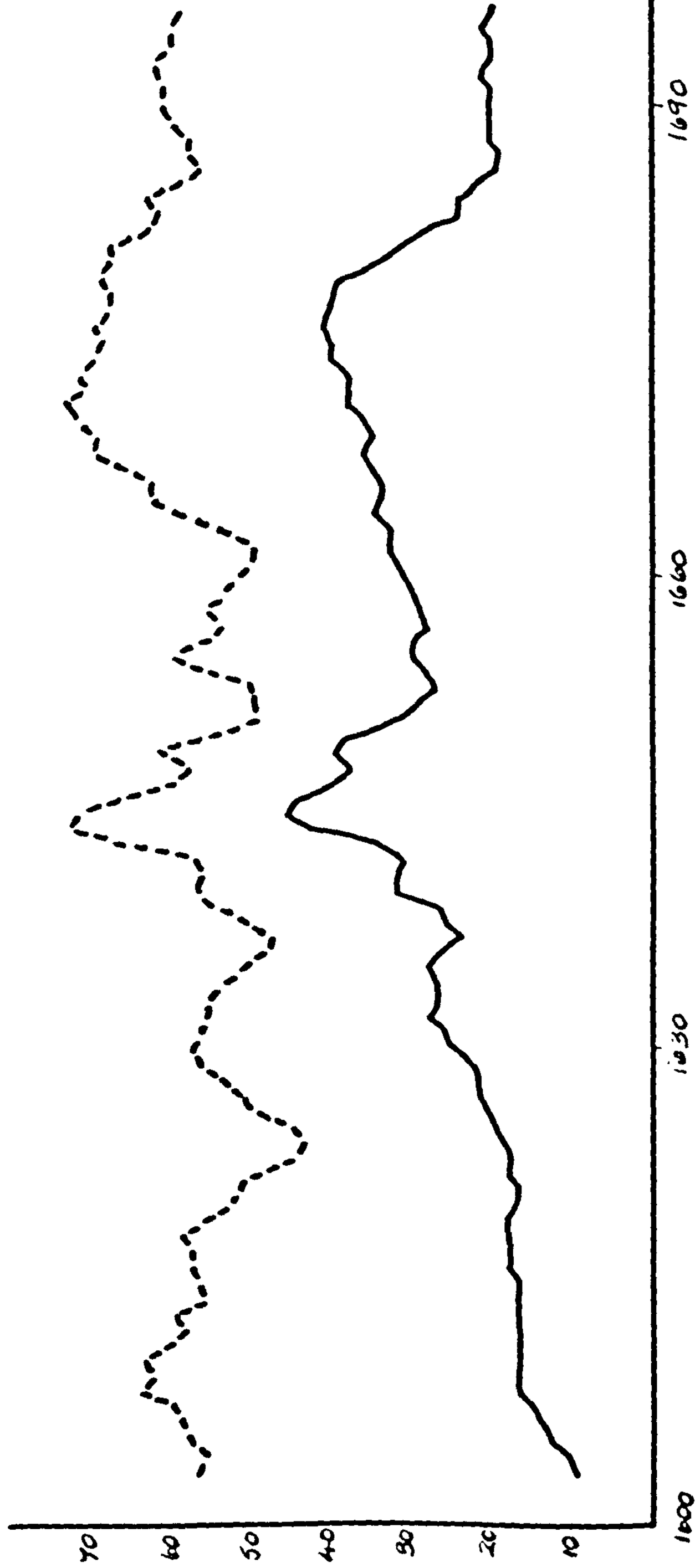

1000
1030
1060
1090
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT (7 YEAR MOVING AVERAGES)
MERCHANTS
CRAFTSMEN

FIGURE 5

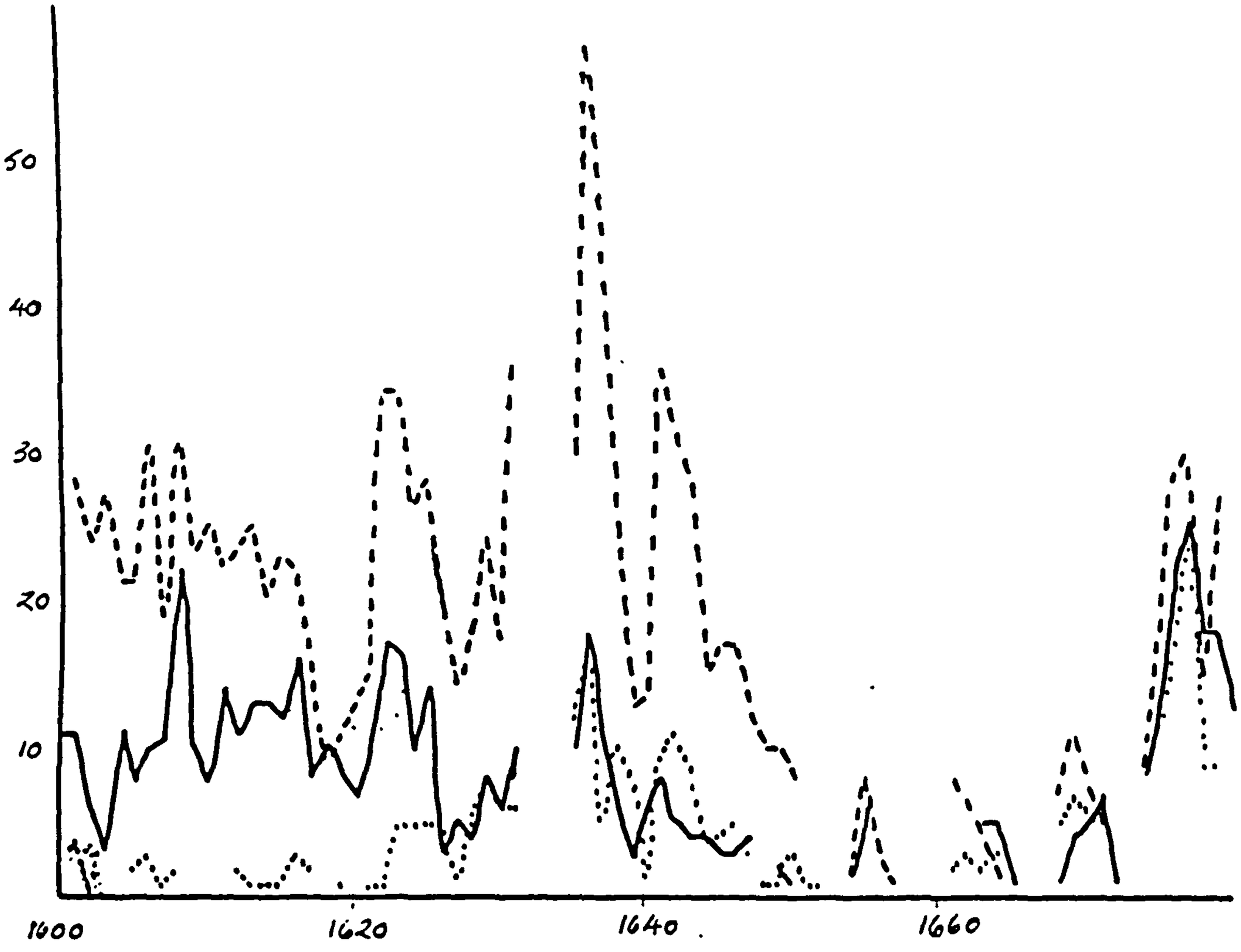


FIGURE 6 ENTRIES OF BALTIC SHIPPING

— TO LEITH — — — TO FIFE PORTS ..... TO FORTH PORTS

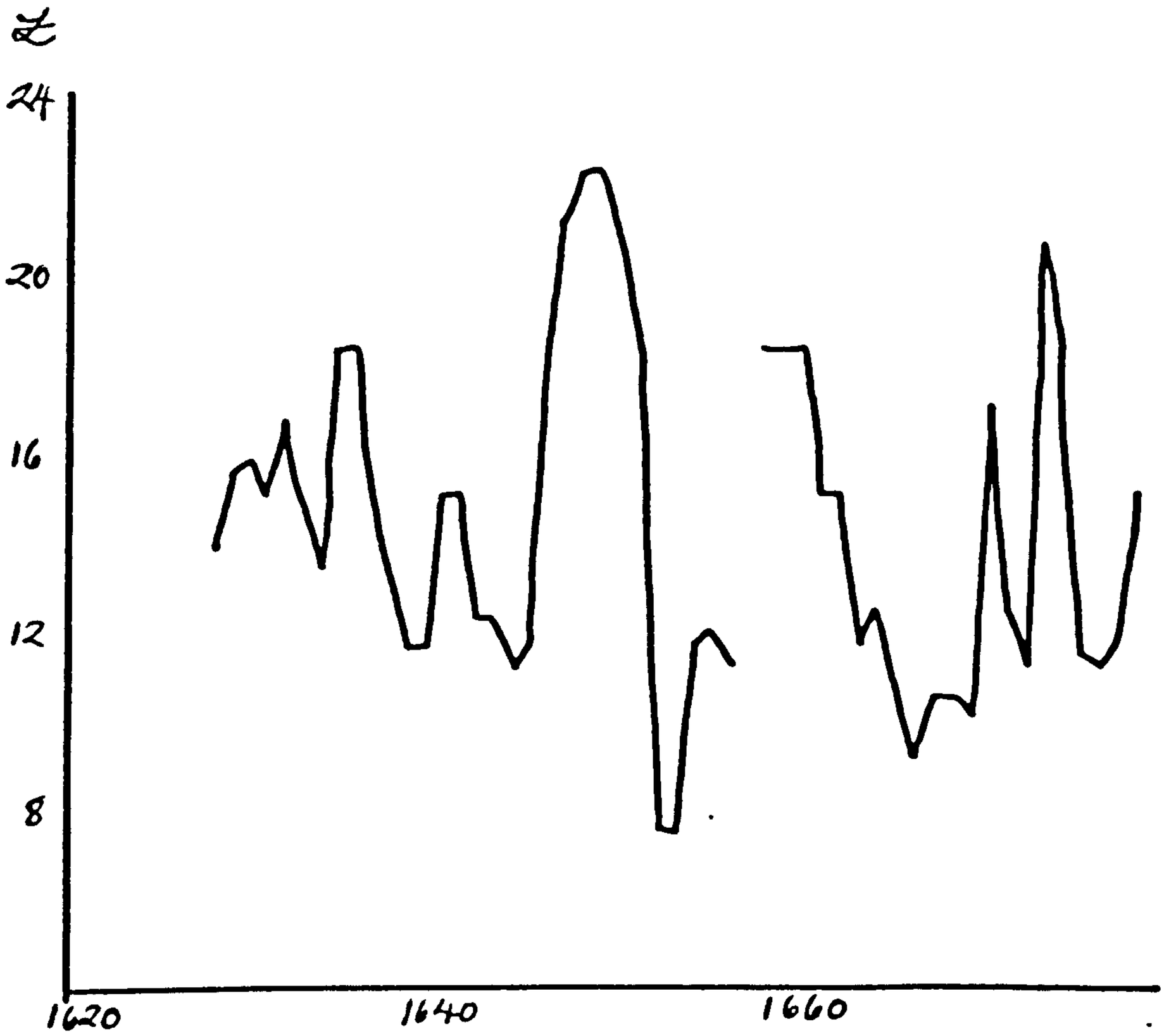
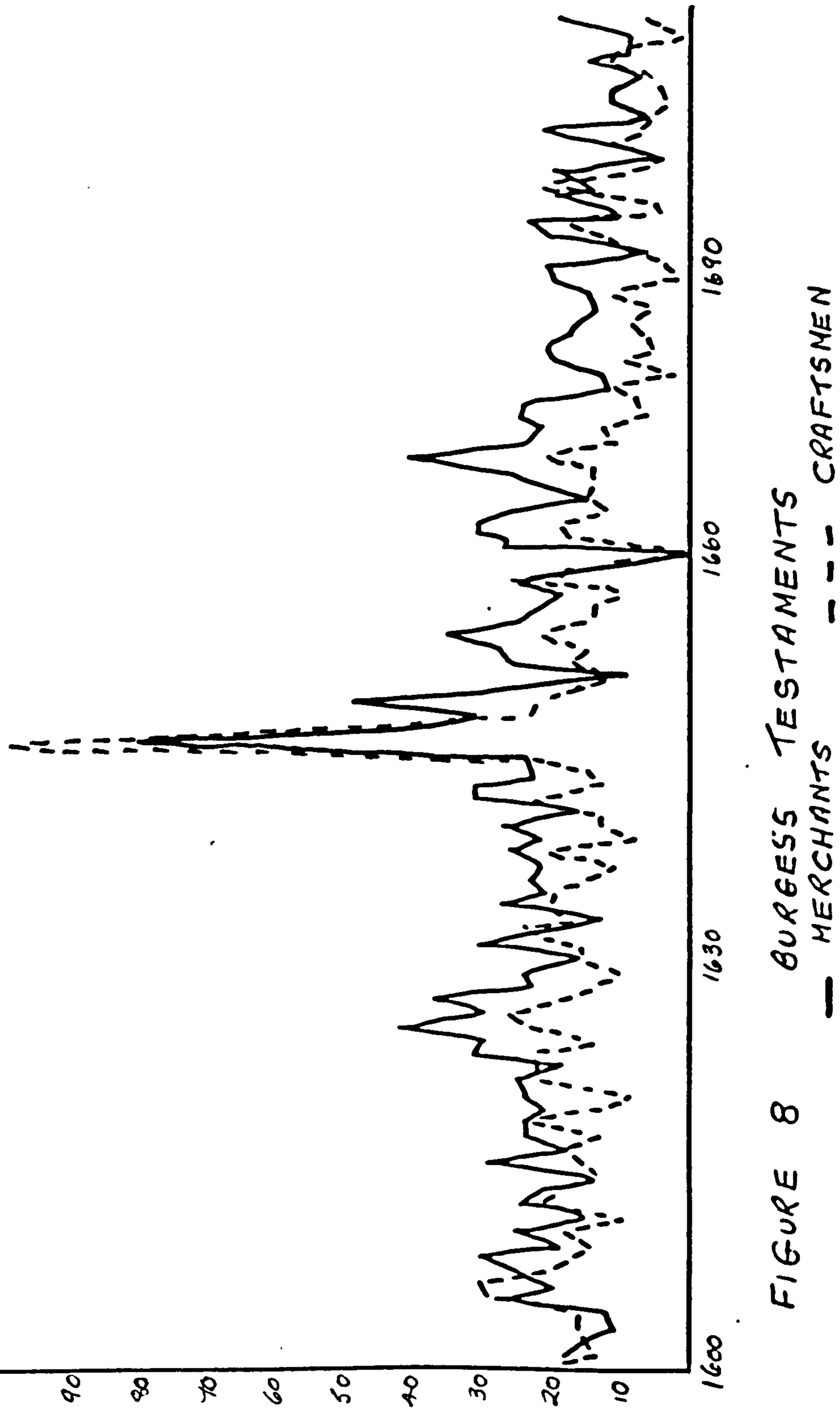


FIGURE 7a MIDLOTHIAN FIARS (WHEAT)
(1 BOLL IN £ STERLING)

FIGURE 7b EDINBURGH WHEAT BREAD
(OUNCES TO 1SHILLING SCOTS)


1600
1630
1660
1690
90
80
70
60
50
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30
20
10
BURGESS TESTAMENTS
— MERCHANTS
- - - CRAFTSMEN

FIGURE 8

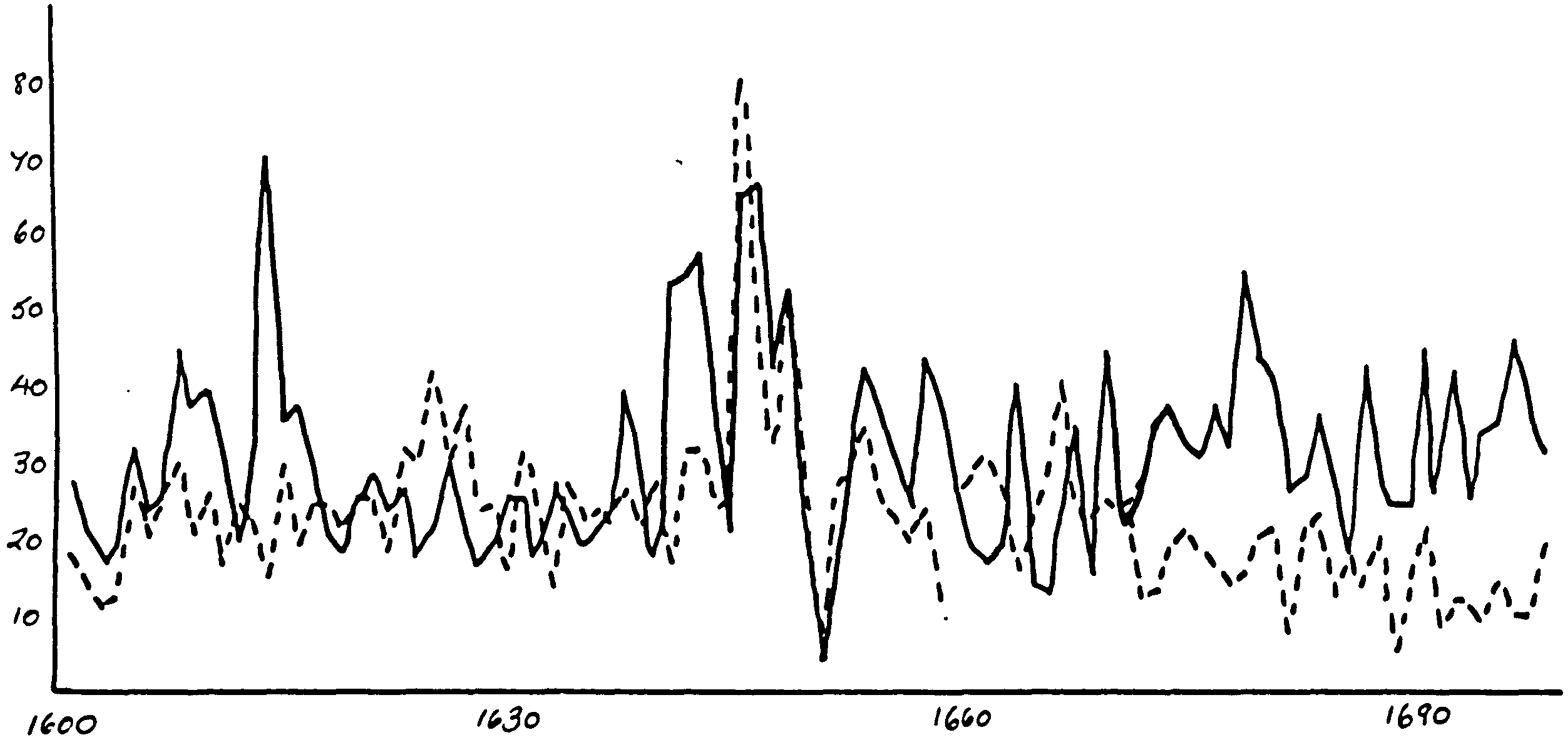

FIGURE 9a MERCHANT BURGESS RECRUITMENT AND MERCHANT TESTAMENTS

—— BURGESSES --- TESTAMENTS

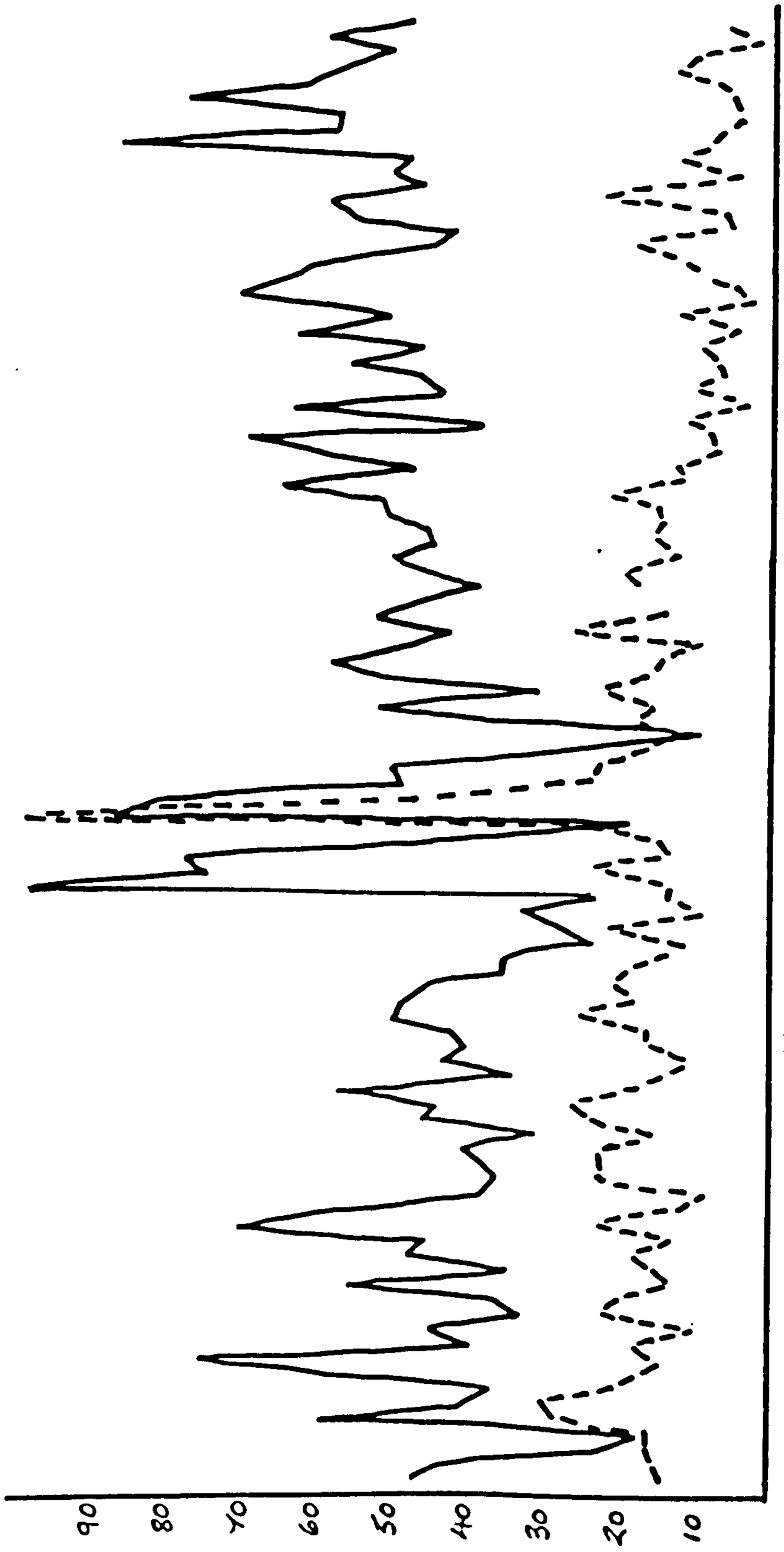

FIGURE 9b CRAFT BURGESS RECRUITMENT AND CRAFT TESTAMENTS

CONCLUSION

"A large, populous, noble, rich and even still a Royal city."[1] Daniel Defoe summed up his view of Edinburgh in the early eighteenth century with these words; they could equally have been applied to the city at any point within the previous hundred years. Edinburgh, in prosperity or recession, made a significant impact on Scottish economy and society; its influence extended throughout many parts of the country and it satisfied all the requirements of a British provincial capital as an important political, administrative, ecclesiastical, social and market centre. It was the last two functions which were considered to be of prime importance in determining the position of an urban centre in a national hierarchy and Edinburgh undoubtedly fulfilled both with regard to Scotland. If Bristol, York, Exeter, Norwich and Newcastle were notable as entrepots which channelled luxury and specialised goods from London, exported local raw materials from and distributed grain throughout their large hinterlands, and generally influenced the pattern of their regional economies[2], then so was Edinburgh. If Brereton, writing about Newcastle, could say -

> "this towne unto this countrye serves in steade of London; by meanes whereof the countrye is supplyed with money", [3]

the same could be said of Edinburgh. If York was an important social centre, with specialised trades and services - doctors, goldsmiths, stationers, hostelries and horse races - and Norwich was a centre of

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1. D. Defoe, A Tour of the Whole Island of Great Britain, Vol II, 1927 edition), p.711.
2. P. Clark and P. Slack (eds.), English Towns in Transition 1500-1700, (London 1976), pp.48-51.
3. Quoted in R. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution (Oxford 1967), p.3.

conspicuous consumption and focal point for neighbouring country gentlemen[1], so also was Edinburgh.

The burgess community of the city, and the merchants in particular, have been identified in this study largely as overseas traders, moneylenders and householders within the burgh. There are, however, two aspects of their economic activities which have scarcely received a mention, their role in industrial development and as landowners and estate managers. The reasons behind the omissions are similar. In the first case, no further information has been uncovered to supplement existing knowledge about the local paper, weaving and brewing industries, or other small enterprises. In the second case, although material might be available in the Register of Deeds for a number of individuals, it is unlikely to be sufficient to form the basis of a conclusive survey on the incidence of merchant landholding.

The limits of this study reflect the limits of the available documents and the non-existence of others. No merchant papers have been discovered to cast new light on Scottish trade through the exploits of individual traders and no local customs records are available for long periods of time. Those that exist have their limitations and the same is also true of burgess testaments, more particularly in the second half of the century.

The source material has nevertheless given us a detailed picture of several groups in burghal society and of individuals within those groups. Attempts have been made to identify the ordinary burgess as well as the merchant elite and doubts have been cast on rigid social

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1. Clark and Slack, op.cit., pp.53-4; J.T. Evans, Seventeenth-Century Norwich: Politics, Religion and Government, 1620-1690 (1979), pp.16-17.

divisions within the burgess community and on the composition and wealth of the burgh council. Edinburgh's port of Leith and the traders who frequented it have been shown to differ in a number of ways from other mercantile communities in Scotland and strong links have been demonstrated with areas both at home and abroad. Finally a possible interpretation of Edinburgh's economic history has been suggested for the period under review, and although more evidence would be required to substantiate the views expressed, the information available has added considerably to our knowledge of the burgh. A recent work on the early modern town, referring to the growth of Edinburgh in the eighteenth century, has stated that 'the early city is somewhat neglected'.[1] That neglect has been partially overcome.

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1. P. Clark, 'The Early Modern Town in the West' in P. Clark (ed.), The Early Modern Town, (1976), p.21.

APPENDIX 1

Craft Wealth as indicated by Testaments (percentages in brackets)

Craft:	Baxters	Bonnetmakers	Book trades
No. of testaments:	107	40	21
Negative	3 (3)	2 (5)	1 (5)
0-100	14 (13)	7 (17)	5 (24)
101-500	45 (42)	11 (27)	4 (19)
501-1000	17 (16)	4 (10)	1 (5)
1001-2500	16 (15)	11 (27)	3 (14)
2501-5000	7 (7)	2 (5)	2 (10)
5001-10000	5 (5)	2 (5)	4 (19)
Over 10000	- -	1 (3)	1 (5)

Craft:	Cordiners	Fleshers	Hammermen
No. of testaments:	34	57	53
Negative	1 (3)	4 (7)	2 (4)
0-100	10 (29)	7 (12)	9 (17)
101-500	13 (38)	17 (30)	25 (47)
501-1000	6 (18)	11 (19)	8 (15)
1001-2500	3 (9)	9 (16)	5 (9)
2501-5000	1 (3)	7 (12)	4 (8)
5001-10000	- -	1 (2)	- -
Over 10000	- -	1 (2)	- -

Craft:	Goldsmiths	Maltmen	Masons
No. of testaments:	17	85	38
Negative	1 (6)	5 (6)	7 (18)
0-100	1 (6)	5 (6)	2 (5)
101-500	4 (24)	31 (36)	15 (39)
501-1000	5 (29)	15 (18)	9 (24)
1001-2500	5 (29)	18 (21)	2 (5)
2501-5000	1 (6)	7 (8)	1 (3)
5001-10000	- -	4 (5)	1 (3)
Over 10000	- -	- -	1 (3)

Craft:	Skinners	Surgeon/apoth.	Tailors
No. of testaments:	56	43	130
Negative	4 (7)	3 (7)	4 (3)
0-100	5 (9)	4 (9)	20 (15)
101-500	22 (39)	5 (12)	47 (36)
501-1000	8 (14)	8 (19)	25 (19)
1001-2500	11 (20)	9 (21)	21 (16)
2501-5000	4 (7)	8 (19)	8 (6)
5001-1000	2 (4)	2 (5)	4 (3)
Over 10000	- -	4 (9)	1 (1)

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 1 continued:-

Craft:	Weavers	Wrights
No. of testaments:	23	45
Negative	3 (13)	5 (11)
0-100	2 (9)	7 (16)
101-500	15 (65)	12 (27)
501-1000	2 (9)	11 (24)
1001-2500	1 (4)	8 (18)
2501-5000	- -	1 (2)
5001-10000	- -	1 (2)
Over 10000	- -	- -

APPENDIX 2

Merchant Property Owners in Edinburgh, 1635.[1]

	No. of Properties	No. of Tenants	Rental Value Tenants	Rental Value Own	Extent Roll	Testament
G. Acheson	7	21	596	90	45	2,243
R. Acheson	1	12	210	-	50	2,728
J. Adinston	2	2	300	-	67	-
J. Aikman	2	12	575	-	-	-
R. Aikman	2	14	411	-	-	1,419
A. Ainslie	1	-	-	240	67	110,655
J. Alison	4	34	314	150	-	-
J. Archibald	4	18	973	-	-	687
T. Armstrong	1	4	92	140	36	-
T. Auld	1	-	-	33	-	-
T. Bannatyne	3	9	216	50	220	8,943
J. Barnes	1	5	368	133	-	62,230
P. Baxter	2	7	124	140	100	1,889
J. Binnie	5	12	476	150	-	-
J. Bisset	1	-	-	100	-	300
R. Black	1	-	-	40	-	1,189
J. Boog	4	9	234	60	-	-
W. Borthwick	1	3	113	40	-	-
S. Boyd	3	6	328	233	140	11,987
A. Brown	1	1	27	-	-	6,167
H. Brown	2	7	276	53	-	-
J. Campbell	1	3	153	-	-	2,317
R. Carnegie	1	2	65	-	-	3,957
T. Charters	4	3	178	200	133	8,173
R. Christie	1	3	47	-	-	-
J. Clerk	2	3	102	-	-	3,753
J. Cochrane	1	-	-	133	-	5,416
W. Cochrane	1	9	663	80	-	-2,155
J. Craw	3	9	302	-	33	3,222
J. Danielstone	2	6	323	100	-	-2,333
R. Davidson	1	2	260	-	-	-

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 2 continued:-

	No. of Properties	No. of Tenants	Rental Value Tenants	Rental Value Own	Extent Roll	Testament
J. Denholm	1	-	-	60	40	-
W. Dick	6	16	893	500	1,200	-
J. Dickson	2	5	104	100	-	204
J. Drummond	2	29	347	33	-	-
J. Ellis	2	6	123	150	-	-
S. Ellis	2	-	-	100	-	9,118
G. Fisher	1	6	235	-	10	107
D. Fleming	3	3	117	100	-	-
J. Fleming	3	2	140	133	140	46,600
P. Forbes	3	4	293	160	-	3,071
G. Fraser	2	3	18	67	20	38,744
R. Geddes	1	2	60	53	-	1,772
W. Geichen	2	4	87	-	-	-
T. Gladstone	1	1	150	150	3	-
R. Glenn	2	4	383	170	60	-
T. Glenn	2	14	233	67	-	-
J. Graham	2	9	96	99	-	4,451
D. Gray	1	16	92	-	-	-
W. Gray	1	2	184	200	433	98,751
J. Halyburton	2	4	210	-	-	-
R. Halyburton	5	18	660	73	40	-
P. Hay	1	1	40	-	-	-
L. Henderson	2	10	585	150	67	11,834
A. Heriot	4	3	140	240	-	-
J. Hilston	1	6	332	133	80	-
R. Hoddom	2	3	80	80	60	-
W. Hutchinson	1	4	50	-	-	-
A. Inglis	2	3	46	-	-	6,261
J. Inglis	4	14	749	160	-	-
J. Inglis	4	19	929	90	100	-
G. Jardane	2	5	124	80	-	231
A. Johnston	3	4	182	13	-	-
J. Johnston	2	2	230	-	-	-
R. Johnston	1	10	122	-	-	-
W. Johnston	2	5	123	-	-	-
G. Jollie	1	3	69	-	45	-
D. Jonkin	4	10	507	150	100	35,809
R. Keith	4	16	430	-	-	1,465
J. Kinloch	1	11	468	30	-	723
J. Kniblo	2	6	273	208	80	2,307
J. Lands	1	1	733	-	-	-
J. Lawson	3	5	92	60	-	-
J. Lightbody	3	15	278	96	60	3,285
T. Lindsay	2	14	857	-	-	-
J. Loch	4	11	268	220	133	-6,877
D. McCall	3	16	450	140	133	-
M. McCall	1	2	180	60	-	-
J. McKean	2	12	138	27	-	-
G. McMoran	1	4	367	-	80	-

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 2 continued:-

	No. of Properties	No. of Tenants	Rental Value Tenants	Rental Value Own	Extent Roll	Testament
J. McNath	1	5	246	80	-	-
J. McNaught	1	2	267	67	27	2,224
J. Marjoribanks	1	2	467	80	30	681
J. Martin	2	-	-	83	-	-
R. Mason	3	6	311	67	90	300
R. Masterton	2	3	37	120	100	-1,247
J. Mein	4	10	296	-	-	-
W. Millar	2	3	93	69	-	644
A. Mitchell	1	4	647	-	-	-
D. Mitchell	2	10	863	160	80	7,356
T. Mitchell	1	5	153	-	-	-
W. Mitchell	4	3	627	-	-	12,674
J. Moodie	4	12	108	-	-	1,416
T. Moodie	2	5	317	120	367	-35,274
W. Moodie	6	17	360	112	-	-
A. Muir	1	1	30	110	-	4,788
T. Muir	1	1	50	-	-	-
J. Morison	2	5	164	20	67	19,608
D. Mouttray	2	6	115	80	-	12,376
D. Murray	2	13	451	173	80	21,722
J. Murray	2	1	13	360	300	15,361
R. Murray	3	7	341	200	180	10,022
J. Nairn	1	1	67	100	-	-
J. Neill	1	3	73	66	-	-
J. Nasmyth	1	1	100	-	150	3,480
J. Nicoll	3	5	683	120	-	387
W. Nisbet	2	5	280	-	-	-
T. Noble	1	5	156	-	-	-
T. Paterson	3	13	345	27	-	-
J. Paton	2	8	66	30	-	-
J. Pearson	2	3	122	8	-	1,031
R. Porteous	1	5	293	-	-	-
J. Power	3	20	590	67	-	-
A. Purves	2	6	253	200	45	4,181
H. Purves	3	2	88	100	36	2,636
J. Rae	3	6	79	400	230	49,467
W. Rae	1	4	330	80	-	-
J. Ramsay	1	1	30	60	-	2,337
W. Rankin	5	16	632	80	80	13,552
A. Reid	1	4	173	107	-	8,833
W. Reid	4	14	583	156	40	-
D. Richardson	1	6	280	110	-	732
J. Riddell	1	4	98	24	-	-
J. Rocheid	2	-	-	267	90	-
A. Robertson	1	1	14	-	-	-
G. Ross	2	16	193	-	-	-
R. Salmond	1	7	300	213	-	-
W. Salmond	4	35	723	147	100	3,122
G. Scott	2	4	52	-	-	53

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 2 continued:-

	No. of Properties	No. of Tenants	Rental Value Tenants	Rental Value Own	Extent Roll	Testament
J. Scott	2	-	-	100	110	31,330
J. Shaw	2	2	80	60	-	-
J. Sinclair	4	5	510	160	-	-
J. Slowan	2	2	77	100	-	16,436
J. Smaill	1	3	50	67	-	-
A. Somervell	2	1	40	110	-	6,097
P. Somervell	7	14	779	100	-	2,797
W. Somervell	2	1	60	100	-	-
A. Speir	7	13	767	200	-	-
A. Steven	2	3	112	-	-	-
A. Stewart	1	-	-	100	-	-
G. Suittie	5	7	408	160	80	20,130
A. Symson	2	10	365	133	110	17,707
A. Telfer	4	6	398	180	-	23,074
P. Telfer	2	10	231	-	-	8,153
D. Thomson	3	3	44	40	-	-
J. Thomson	1	-	-	27	-	-
W. Thomson	2	16	336	-	-	-
A. Tod	1	-	107	120	-	-
J. Trotter	1	1	100	253	-	36,988
R. Trotter	1	2	33	53	40	-
J. Troupe	1	1	100	133	-	23,511
J. Tweedie	1	2	100	120	-	20,305
J. Veitch	4	7	470	140	-	6,478
J. Wardrope	1	1	72	67	-	-
G. Wauchope	2	3	373	-	-	-
D. Weir	1	2	72	-	-	-
J. Wickedshaw	5	26	263	33	-	-
W. Wilkie	1	1	18	133	40	4,019
G. Williamson	4	20	296	110	67	6,156
J. Wilson	1	2	31	42	-	7,782
J. Windram	2	12	353	-	100	4,808
P. Wood	1	8	259	-	200	-

1. This is a list of all the known merchant property owners - there were undoubtedly others who were not designated as 'merchant' in the original manuscript.

Source: E.C.A., Extent Roll for Annuity Tax, 1635.

APPENDIX 3

'Inner' Council Members 1620-59

	No. of years on council[1]	Extent roll(£)[2]	Testament (£)[3]	Rental Value(£)[4]
Gilbert Acheson	7	45	2,243	826
Robert Acheson	6	50	2,728	310
David Aikenhead	12	-	-	210
Andrew Ainslie	8	67	110,655	240
John Binnie	9	-	-	626
Peter Blackburn	10	20	-	120
Stephen Boyd	5	140	11,987	561
Andrew Bryson	4	-	867	-
John Byres	9	-	6,162	-
Thomas Calderwood	4	-	17,432	-
Thomas Charteris	9	133	8,173	378
Alexander Clerk	17	-	-	200
James Cochrane	11	-	5,416	133
John Denholm	5	40	-	127
William Dick	17	1200	-	1460
Edward Edgar	11	-	-	180
James Ellis	5	-	-	273
Patrick Ellis	7	100	-	-
John Fairholme	5	150	-	-
Edward Farquhar	4	-	1,395	120
John Fleming	5	140	46,600	273
Robert Fleming	8	100	-	-
William Gray	12	433	98,751	384
Charles Hamilton	4	80	6,049	-
Hew Hamilton	8	70	7,764	180
Laurence Henderson	4	67	11,834	735
John Jossie	8	80	-	-
John Kniblo	5	80	2,307	481
James Loch	4	133	-6,877	488
David McCall	7	133	-	590
Mungo McCall	4	-	-	240
John McNaught	12	27	2,224	334
John Marjoribanks	6	-	-	-
Joseph Marjoribanks	7	30	681	547
Robert Masterton	4	100	-1,247	157
Thomas Moodie	4	367	-35,274	690
James Murray	4	300	15,361	373
Robert Murray	7	-	-	-
William Nisbet	6	-	-	280
John Pearson	6	-	1,031	130
Andrew Ramsay	5	-	-	-
William Reid	8	40	-	739
William Reid yr.	5	-	-	-
David Richardson	5	-	732	390
James Rocheid	10	90	-	267
John Rynd	5	67	2,749	200
Robert Sandilands	6	50	-	100

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 3 continued:

	No. of years on council	Extent Roll(£)	Testament (£)	Rental Value(£)
John Sinclair	11	100	-	790
John Smith	12	167	-	233
Peter Somervell	4	-	2,797	879
Alexander Speir	9	-	-	967
James Stewart	7	-	-	-
George Suittie	19	80	20,130	615
Archibald Sydserf	5	80	-	140
Andrew Symson	5	110	17,707	498
Patrick Thomson	8	43	-	100
Archibald Tod	18	-	-	227
William Trotter	5	-	18,977	-
Nicoll Udward	8	-	923	-
David Wilkie	9	-	-	-
Gilbert Williamson	5	67	6,156	406

Other Council Members

John Adinston	1	67	-	460
James Alison	2	-	-	464
George Baillie	3	80	-	-
James Barnes	1	-	62,230	554
Patrick Baxter	2	100	1,889	264
Robert Davison	1	-	-	260
William Dick yr.	1	-	22,596	-
John Edgar	1	-	6,460	-
John Hilston	2	80	-	465
John Inglis *	1	100	27-30,000	929
David Jonkin	1	100	35,809	657
John Liddell	2	-	814	-
John Mein	2	-	-	296
David Mitchell	1	80	7,356	1203
Alexander Monteith	1	-	58,937	120
John Morison	1	67	19,608	284
David Murray	1	80	21,722	624
James Murray yr.	1	100	-	-
James Nasmyth	1	150	3,480	100
Andrew Purves	3	45	4,181	453
James Rae	3	230	49,467	639
George Stirling	1	70	-	-
John Trotter	3	-	36,988	353
Robert Trotter	1	40	-	186
George Walker	2	-	26,221	-
William Wilkie	2	40	4,019	151
Patrick Wood	1	200	-	592

Continued overleaf:-

APPENDIX 3 continued:

1. All of those listed held office at some time, either as Provost, Dean of Guild, Treasurer or Bailie. The number of years referred to are those which fell within the period 1620-59; no account is taken of council membership in earlier or later years. Slight error might have resulted in cases where father and son both had the same name; George Suittie, for example, apparently served for 19 years but this might have been the combined total of council positions for both men.

2. Extent Rolls for either 1634 or 1642 have been used. Where figures for both years exist, the higher one has been given.

3. Any testament of a merchant or his spouse has been included. Where more than one testament exists, the highest figure has been noted.

4. Total valued rental has been calculated from all properties, including the merchant's own dwelling house.

* Two merchants with the name John Inglis are registered in the Commissariot Record, both wealthy men, with estates valued at between £27-30,000.

Source: Council lists in E.R.B.E.

APPENDIX 4a

Exports from Leith - available years 1611-28

	1611-12	1624-5	1626-7	1627-8
Oats	446	60	-	-
Bear	3000	1390	1680	-
Wheat	-	400	2420	5355
Rye	240	160	-	-
Peas	-	400	-	-
Malt	73	220	-	100
Other *	652	-	-	290
Salt	65	-	15	76
Coal	355	30	19	83
Herring	221	502	235	282
Salmon	54	32	64	51
Tar	19	7	13	-
Pitch	4	-	2	-
Lambskins	10160	53700	33900	?
Futfells	3760	7550	6500	6600
Sheepskins	-	81930	67810	60860
Goatskins	-	3220	6400	11020
Cunningskins	3500	13800	15100	?
Deerskins	-	500	160	160
Other skins +	-	3406	986	6904
Hides	1211	895	245	550
Knappald	4300	1300	200	-
Deals	900	1400	200	-
Wool	-	8895	186	488
Feathers	-	125	240	420
Yarn	-	3870	3680	4230
Wax	120	62	7	32
Brass	-	114	16	72
Cloth and plaiding	-	23480	41384	55850
Other cloth	-	3860	190	-
Knithose	-	13830	10660	13300
Gloves	-	44	14	-
Butter	-	63	98	56

* Other includes mixed oats and bear (1611-12) and meal/flour (1627-8)
? = illegible
+ Other skins includes kidskins, todskins, calfskins, marten and otterskins

Measurements: Cereal in bolls, salt and coal in chalders, fish and tar/pitch in lasts, hides in daikers (1 daiker = 10), wool and brass in stones, feathers and yarn in lbs., wax in shippounds, cloth in ells, knithose in pairs, gloves in gross, butter in barrels.

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First series, E72/29/5,10,11.

APPENDIX 4b

Exports from Leith - available years 1666-73

	1666-7	1671-2	1672-3
Malt	1482	-	128
Bear	490	-	132
Wheat	286	-	-
Meal	450	-	156
Salt	2	540	240
Coal	50	12	160
Herring	122	2	-
Salmon	51	37	78
Lobsters	-	4800	5200
Oysters (shell)	722000	229000	403000
(pickled)	-	32	25
Hides	143	37	2
Sheepskins	14200	9210	11020
Lambskins	4000	1400	1500
Goatskins	2000	2300	200
Futfells	-	15800	18500
Other skins	1020	8100	8420
Yarn	-	2100	3500
Wool	-	420	140
Plaiding	41638	14440	194370
Linen cloth	-	5100	7220
Woollen cloth	-	230	1660
Ticking	-	1660	730
Galloway whites	230	800	5800
Other cloth	-	730	2260
Stockings	40	914	905
Gloves	108	32	5
Feathers	3520	6500	-
Butter	106	-	45
Eggs	-	226	29
Brass	600	-	2375
Tallow	33505	24100	23850

Measurements: Cereal in bolls, salt and coal in chalders, herring and salmon in lasts, pickled oysters in gallons, hides in daikers, wool in stones, all cloth in ells, stockings in dozens, gloves in gross, butter in barrels, feathers yarn and tallow and brass in lbs., eggs in barrels.

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, Second Series, E72/15/2-19.

APPENDIX 5a

Destinations of ships leaving Leith, available years (Percentages in brackets)

	1611-12	1626-7	1627-8	1666-7	1671-2	1672-3	Total 1620s	Total 1670s
France	34 (39)	9 (11)	- -	4 (5)	13 (15)	11 (11)	43 (16)	28 (10)
Norway	6 (7)	1 (1)	- -	4 (5)	1 (1)	5 (5)	7 (3)	10 (4)
Sweden	- -	4 (5)	4 (4)	5 (6)	4 (5)	2 (2)	8 (3)	11 (4)
Baltic	6 (7)	6 (7)	11 (12)	3 (4)	6 (7)	3 (3)	23 (9)	12 (4)
Denmark	6 (7)	2 (2)	1 (1)	- -	1 (1)	7 (7)	9 (3)	8 (3)
Netherlands	9 (10)	23 (28)	31 (33)	8 (9)	8 (9)	- -	63 (24)	16 (6)
Flanders	11 (13)	5 (6)	9 (10)	26 (31)	6 (7)	35 (35)	25 (10)	67 (25)
England	9 (10)	31 (38)	32 (34)	18 (21)	41 (48)	31 (31)	72 (28)	90 (33)
Spain	3 (3)	- -	- -	2 (2)	- -	- -	3 (1)	2 (2)
Other/unknown	3 (3)	- -	5 (5)	15 (18)	6 (7)	5 (5)	8 (3)	26 (10)
Totals	87	81	93	85	86	99	261	270

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, E71/29/6, 9, 11 and E72/15/6, 11, 14

5b Nationality of ships leaving Leith, available years (Percentages in brackets)

	1611-12	1626-7	1627-8	1666-7
Scottish	51 (59)	49 (60)	55 (59)	18 (21)
Swedish	- -	1 (1)	- -	7 (8)
Baltic States	- -	3 (4)	3 (3)	7 (8)
Dutch	5 (6)	6 (7)	10 (11)	4 (3)
Flemish	1 (1)	2 (2)	4 (4)	27 (32)
English	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	9 (11)
Other/unknown	29 (33)	19 (23)	20 (21)	13 (15)
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	87	81	93	85

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, E71/29/6, 9 and 11 and E72/15/6

5c Entries of ships by area of departure, available years 1621-3 and 1665-74 (percentages in brackets)

	1621-2	1622-3	Total	1665-6	1666-7	1672-3	1673-4	Total(1665-73)
France	36 (11)	48 (15)	84 (13)	2 (3)	3 (4)	10 (10)	12 (6)	15 (6)
Norway	36 (11)	27 (8)	63 (10)	10 (13)	6 (7)	14 (14)	23 (12)	30 (12)
Sweden	3 (1)	4 (1)	7 (1)	4 (5)	6 (7)	4 (4)	3 (2)	14 (5)
Baltic	61 (19)	57 (17)	118 (18)	6 (8)	9 (11)	7 (7)	7 (4)	22 (9)
Denmark	17 (5)	6 (2)	23 (4)	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Netherlands	143 (44)	157 (48)	300 (46)	- -	5 (6)	1 (1)	12 (6)	6 (2)
Flanders	- -	- -	- -	19 (24)	25 (30)	17 (18)	10 (5)	61 (24)
England	27 (8)	19 (6)	46 (7)	27 (35)	17 (20)	37 (38)	29 (16)	81 (31)
Other/unknown	2 (1)	11 (3)	13 (2)	10 (13)	12 (14)	7 (7)	91 (49)	29 (11)
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	325	329	654	78	83	97	187	258

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, E71/29/7 and 8, E72/15/2, 5, 13 and 18

5d Nationality of ships entering Leith, available years (Percentages in brackets)

	1621-2	1622-3	1640-1	1643-4	1644-6	1665-6	1666-7	1672-3	Total 1620s	Total 1640s	Total 1660s
Scottish	145(45)	189(57)	118(72)	58(60)	70(65)	46(59)	27(33)	53(55)	334(51)	246(67)	126(49)
Norwegian	4(1)	8(2)	6(4)	12(12)	8(7)	2(3)	2(2)	4(4)	12(2)	26(7)	8(3)
Swedish	1 -	- -	2(1)	- -	3(3)	4(5)	5(6)	5(5)	1 -	5(1)	14(5)
Baltic states	31(10)	30(9)	7(4)	7(7)	4(4)	5(6)	9(11)	7(7)	61(9)	18(5)	21(8)
Danish	9(3)	6(2)	10(6)	1(1)	3(3)	- -	- -	- -	15(2)	14(4)	- -
Dutch	89(27)	74(22)	- -	1(1)	5(5)	- -	3(4)	- -	163(25)	6(2)	3(1)
Flemish	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	10(13)	15(18)	18(19)	- -	- -	43(17)
English	5(2)	4(1)	5(3)	11(11)	- -	1(1)	4(5)	- -	9(1)	16(4)	5(2)
French	13(4)	2(1)	- -	1(1)	- -	- -	- -	- -	15(2)	1(1)	- -
Other/unknown	28(9)	16(5)	15(9)	6(6)	15(14)	10(13)	18(22)	10(10)	44(7)	36(10)	38(14)
Total	325	329	163	97	108	78	83	97	654	368	258

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books and E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun

5e Entries of ships by area of departure, 1636-47 (Percentages in brackets)

	1636-7	1637-8	1638-9	1639-40	1640-1	1641-2	1643-4	1644-6	1647	Totals
Bordeaux	40 (14)	31 (24)	23 (17)	23 (26)	8 (5)	37 (18)	15 (13)	43 (26)	7 (8)	227 (16)
Rochelle	26 (9)	1 (1)	7 (5)	- -	4 (2)	13 (6)	4 (3)	12 (7)	4 (5)	71 (5)
France(north)	18 (6)	8 (6)	10 (7)	6 (7)	15 (9)	12 (6)	12 (10)	8 (5)	1 (1)	90 (7)
Norway	54 (19)	21 (17)	33 (24)	17 (19)	26 (15)	34 (16)	23 (19)	31 (19)	28 (32)	267 (19)
Sweden	23 (8)	3 (2)	3 (2)	7 (8)	11 (6)	12 (6)	1 (1)	7 (4)	3 (3)	70 (5)
Baltic	40 (14)	19 (15)	11 (8)	6 (7)	32 (19)	33 (16)	11 (9)	14 (9)	12 (14)	178 (13)
Denmark	12 (4)	3 (2)	2 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	5 (2)	2 (2)	2 (1)	2 (2)	30 (2)
Netherlands	39 (14)	25 (20)	27 (20)	16 (18)	33 (19)	28 (13)	18 (15)	17 (10)	9 (10)	212 (15)
England	18 (6)	7 (6)	12 (9)	5 (6)	26 (15)	18 (8)	20 (17)	11 (7)	5 (6)	122 (9)
Spain	3 (1)	2 (2)	1 (1)	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (1)	6 (5)	13 (8)	5 (6)	36 (3)
Other/unknown	8 (3)	7 (6)	7 (5)	5 (6	15 (9)	15 (7)	6 (5)	6 (4)	11 (13)	80 (6)
Totals	281	127	136	88	172	210	118	164	87	1383

Source: E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun

5f Entries of ships by area of departure, 1636-47, wine ships removed. (Percentages in brackets)

	1636-7	1637-8	1638-9	1639-40	1640-1	1641-2	1643-4	1644-6	1647	Totals
France	44 (18)	9 (10)	17 (15)	6 (10)	19 (12)	25 (15)	16 (17)	20 (19)	5 (7)	161 (14)
Norway	54 (23)	21 (22)	33 (29)	17 (27)	26 (16)	34 (20)	23 (24)	31 (29)	28 (37)	267 (24)
Sweden	23 (10)	3 (3)	3 (3)	7 (11)	11 (7)	12 (7)	1 (1)	7 (6)	3 (4)	70 (6)
Baltic	40 (17)	19 (20)	11 (10)	6 (10)	32 (20)	33 (19)	11 (11)	14 (13)	12 (16)	178 (16)
Denmark	12 (5)	3 (3)	2 (2)	1 (2)	1 (1)	5 (3)	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (3)	30 (3)
Netherlands	39 (16)	25 (27)	27 (24)	16 (25)	33 (20)	28 (16)	18 (19)	17 (16)	9 (12)	212 (19)
England	18 (8)	7 (7)	12 (11)	5 (8)	26 (16)	18 (11)	20 (21)	11 (10)	5 (7)	122 (11)
Other/unknown	8 (3)	7 (7)	7 (6)	5 (8)	15 (9)	15 (9)	6 (6)	6 (6)	11 (15)	80 (7)
Totals	238	94	112	63	163	170	97	108	75	1120

Source: E.C.A., Accounts of the Merk per Tun

APPENDIX 6

Imports to Leith, 1621-23

	1621-2	1622-3
Alum	23160 lbs.	37000 lbs.
Aniseed	3190 lbs.	1420 lbs.
Apples	666 barrels	338 barrels
Ash	5 lasts	37 lasts
Beer	131 tuns	281 tuns
Brazil	15350 lbs.	9600 lbs.
Burnwood	187 faddoms	142 faddoms
Cards (wool)	933 doz.	534 doz.
Cereal:- beans	216 lasts	1448 lasts
bear	3492 lasts	675 lasts
malt	452 lasts	532 lasts
meal	29 lasts	-
oats	116 lasts	355 lasts
peas	323 lasts	160 lasts
rye	1265 lasts	1258 lasts
wheat	24 lasts	-
other/mixed	23 lasts	943 lasts
Cloth:- bays and says	800 yds.+131 pieces	7103 yds.+200 pieces
broad cloth	1585 yds.	3794 yds.
buckasie	580 pieces	98 pieces
buckram	61 pieces	142 pieces
camlets	82	94
camrick	112 pieces	94 pieces
grograin	312 yds.+163 pieces	763 yds.+69 pieces
Holland cloth	192 ells	1100 ells
pyropus	112 pieces	344 pieces
rissills	57	56
silk	488 lbs.	276 lbs.
taffeta	32 pieces+180 ells	318 ells
Total including	3615 yds. +	13885 yds. +
other types	2000 pieces	1965 pieces
Collars	69 doz.	49 doz.
Combs	106 gross	115 gross
Confeits	2235 lbs.	4066 lbs.
Currants	2600 lbs.	1720 lbs.
Deals and planks	21400	16144
Drugs and dyes:-		
azure	810 lbs.	1460 lbs.
brimstone	1410 lbs.	1880 lbs.
copperas	22900 lbs.	13220 lbs.
galls	5120 lbs.	2610 lbs.
gum	20 lbs.	-
indigo	156 lbs.	80 lbs.
orchard litt	190 barrels	92 barrels
panes	7690 lbs.	1625 lbs.
smalt	8200 lbs.	6000 lbs.
woad	24900 lbs.+54 balls	39120 lbs.+75 balls

Appendix 6 continued:-

	1621-2	1622-3
Girdles	72 doz.	183 doz.
Girths	28000	15000
Gloves	91 doz.	483 doz.
Gunpowder	3135 lbs.	2076 lbs.
Hards	22720 lbs.	11400 lbs.
Hardware including:-	6 cwt. copper kettles 32 kists glasses 250 lbs. brass candlesticks 9 doz. sword blades	5 cwt. copper kettles + 200 30 kists glasses 8 doz. candlesticks, 204 lbs. candles 2 doz. sword blades + 22 doz. knives
Hatbands	191 doz.	398 doz.
Hats	174 doz.	194 doz.
Hemp	64312 lbs.	68800 lbs.
Honey	14 barrels	6 barrels
Hoops	7000	24000
Hops	15400 lbs.	22200 lbs.
Iron	2032 shippounds	1789 shippounds
Knappald	6545	13210
Linseed	64 barrels	129 barrels
Lint	265748 lbs.	94000 lbs.
Madder	7200 lbs.	21200 lbs.
Oil	147 barrels + 108 tuns	30 barrels + 2 tuns
Onions	1490 barrels	2450 barrels
Onion seed	31 poks	8 poks
Paper	1223 reams	1017 reams
Playing cards	36 gross	48 gross
Pots	353 doz.	214 doz.
Prundames	1560 lbs. + 23 punchones	200 lbs. + 87 punchones
Raisins	6670 lbs.	9950 lbs.
Rice	250 lbs.	550 lbs.
Salt	7770 bolls	16970 bolls
Spars	20020	15100
Spices:- cinnamon	4 lbs.	72 lbs.
ginger	132 lbs.	230 lbs.
liquorice	800 lbs.	744 lbs.
pepper	567 lbs.	650 lbs.
others	735 lbs.	492 lbs.
Starch	15400 lbs.	11100 lbs.
Stings	67700	55700
Stockings	440 pairs	1272 pairs
Sugar	12575 lbs.	10070 lbs.
Sugar Candy	826 lbs.	1540 lbs.
Tackle	9932 lbs.	800 lbs.
Tar	124 lasts +12 lasts pitch	103 lasts +12 lasts pitch
Timber	57 tuns	-
Tow	7220 lbs.	5110 lbs.

Continued overleaf:-

Appendix 6 continued:-

	1621-2	1622-3
Vinegar	38 tuns	22 punchones
Wanescott	143	698
Wax	196 shippound	268 shippound
Wire	4700 lbs.	3400 lbs.

Source: S.R.O., Leith Customs Books, First Series, E71/15/7 and 8.

Note This is not intended to be a fully comprehensive list of all imports to Leith in this period. There were numerous items of hardware and cremerie goods in particular which were too insignificant to warrant a separate mention. Measurements are as stated in the manuscripts - no attempt has been made to convert them into modern units.

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